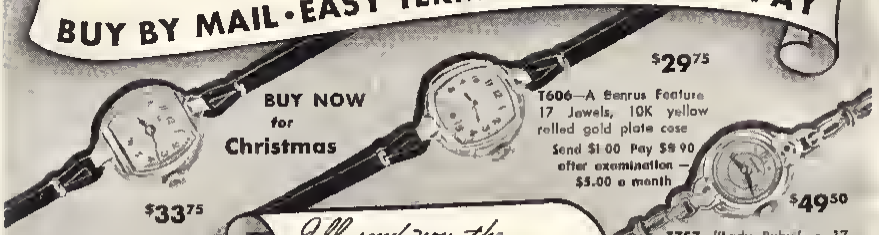

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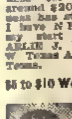
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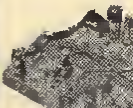


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NEXT ISSUE PUBLISHED DECEMBER 3RD

G-8 and His BATTLE ACES

Vol. 27 Contents for December, 1943 No. 3



The Master Spy Fights His Greatest Battle Against—

THE WINGS OF THE IRON CLAW

As told by G-8 to Robert J. Hogan 8

Out of the caverns of the lost came the deathless beast-men of Herr Goulon, Hunland's Master-mind of Murder—and to save the world he was fighting for, the Ace American Flying Spy had to undertake a solo flight—beyond the grave!

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Doomed to be shot at dawn, the Red Falcon fought a last desperate battle, for the right to answer the flaming challenge of the death trap in the sky—which no man could approach and live!

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You can't tell a guy who knows better that he isn't an ace on his first flight—you've got to spell it out for him with swift death in flame-filled skies!

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G-8 SPEAKS *Voice of the G-8 Club* 6

Personal notes from the Master Spy to you.

Illustrations by H. W. Kiemle

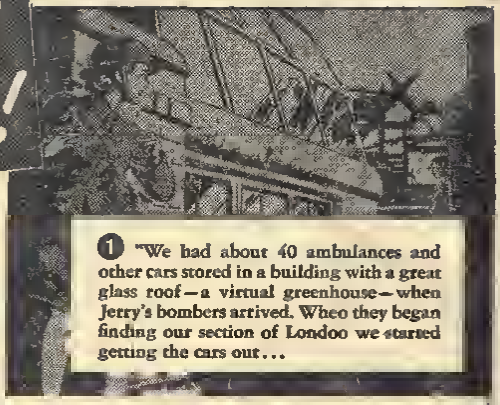
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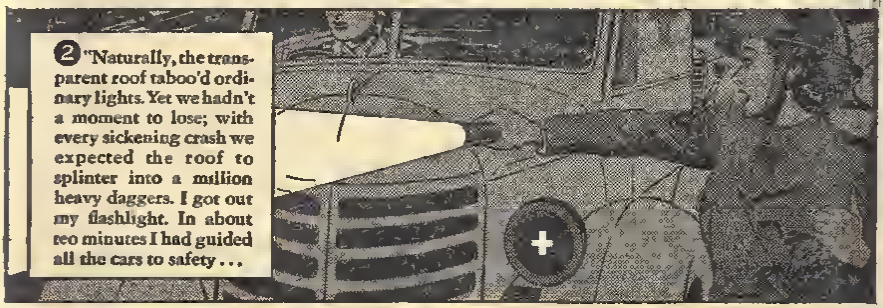
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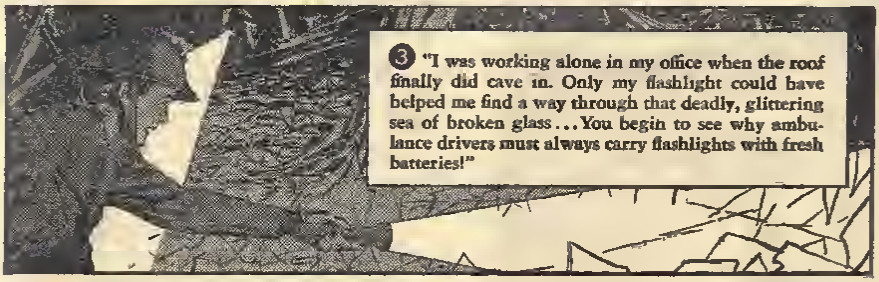
(The exciting experience of Margaret Bridges, of the London Auxiliary Ambulance service, during one of London's heaviest raids. Pretty, attractive 30-year-old Miss Bridges is part English, part American. She volunteered for the ambulance service, reporting for duty just three days before war was declared.)



1 "We had about 40 ambulances and other cars stored in a building with a great glass roof—a virtual greenhouse—when Jerry's bombers arrived. When they began finding our section of London we started getting the cars out...



2 "Naturally, the transparent roof taboo'd ordinary lights. Yet we hadn't a moment to lose; with every sickening crash we expected the roof to splinter into a million heavy daggers. I got out my flashlight. In about ten minutes I had guided all the cars to safety...



3 "I was working alone in my office when the roof finally did cave in. Only my flashlight could have helped me find a way through that deadly, glittering sea of broken glass... You begin to see why ambulance drivers must always carry flashlights with fresh batteries!"

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G-8 Speaks

HELLO GANG:

We're having snappy weather now—or are you down on some tropical island where it's warm all the time? Well, up where I am at the moment, the chilly breezes are blowing round and round, so I suggest that we get in out of the cold and gather around while some of the gang light up a fire for this gab-fest.

Stanley Griffin, you're from Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania. You should know how to build a fire and make it burn. Suppose you be the piler-oner—and Billy Ball of Arlington, Texas, you bring in some of that crackling gnarled cedar you've got down your way. Bill Thornberg of Wilmington, Ohio, you help Billy with the wood, and Carmen Nacci, give me a hand with these hot dogs and we'll let you and Jerry Bloom from Brooklyn do the roasting of the dogs. Now how's that? Are we off?

Oh-oh. Listen to *this* for a starter.

Dopey G-8:

I have read your magazine for exactly six issues and I want to say that it is the lowest form of literature. Why don't you get some reason in your stories? All you have is excitement and that's all right, sometimes, but I've been studying Shakespeare in school, and believe me that guy could write.

Furthermore, why don't you kill off some character sometimes? You only kill the ones that we don't care about anyway. How about letting G-8 really cut off Herr Doktor Krueger's head one of these times and then dry the old Herr Doktor's head and hang it up in the living room of the end hangar apartment?

You certainly can turn out the most fantastic stuff I ever read. How do you expect a guy to understand and believe such stuff when you never get more than a scratch yourself. Who are you, Saperlady or somebody?

Yours for more literary class in the G-8 stories.

Dis Atisfied.

Well, Dis, you've put up a high bar to hook our ambitions to. So you're studying Shakespeare, are you? Well, now I've got nothing against Shakespeare. He was a good writer, too, but I just wonder, gang, how many of you would like to see *G-8 and his Battle Aces* made over on the general pattern of *As You Like It* or *Hamlet*. Drop us a line and let us know what you think about this.

And so you want Krueger's head chopped off right in public. Why you bloodthirsty guy! After all, the little fellow was just giving out for dear old Germany and you can't blame him for that—or can you?

Well, don't lose too much sleep over it, Dis. Because the fact that you stuck with us for the last six issues shows that we have something you spend money for, even if you don't like it.

And now gang, from good old Georgia comes the following letter from a new member of the gang—William Smith, of 3130 Jackson St., Box 263, Hapeville, Ga., and he has this to say.

Dear G-8:

I have been reading your mag only a short time, but I have managed to get old ones as far back as 1939.

I have just finished THE DEATH MONSTER'S LAST PATROL.

I would like to enroll as a lone agent, as I can't get a chapter started of my own.

Will you please send me the names of books where I can study about airplanes, theory of flight and about airplane engines?

And please tell me where to order a practice buzzer.

Yours truly,
William Smith.

Well, William, about that buzzer, right now I can't tell you where to get one. The armed forces are using about the entire output of that sort, but here are a couple of suggestions. How about looking in the "For Sale" ads of the big-town papers. Also you might put an ad in the wanted section of the paper telling what you want. Or you might look through the ads in the electrical magazines.

Here is a list of reference books which may be either purchased or borrowed from your local library.

(Continued on page 90)



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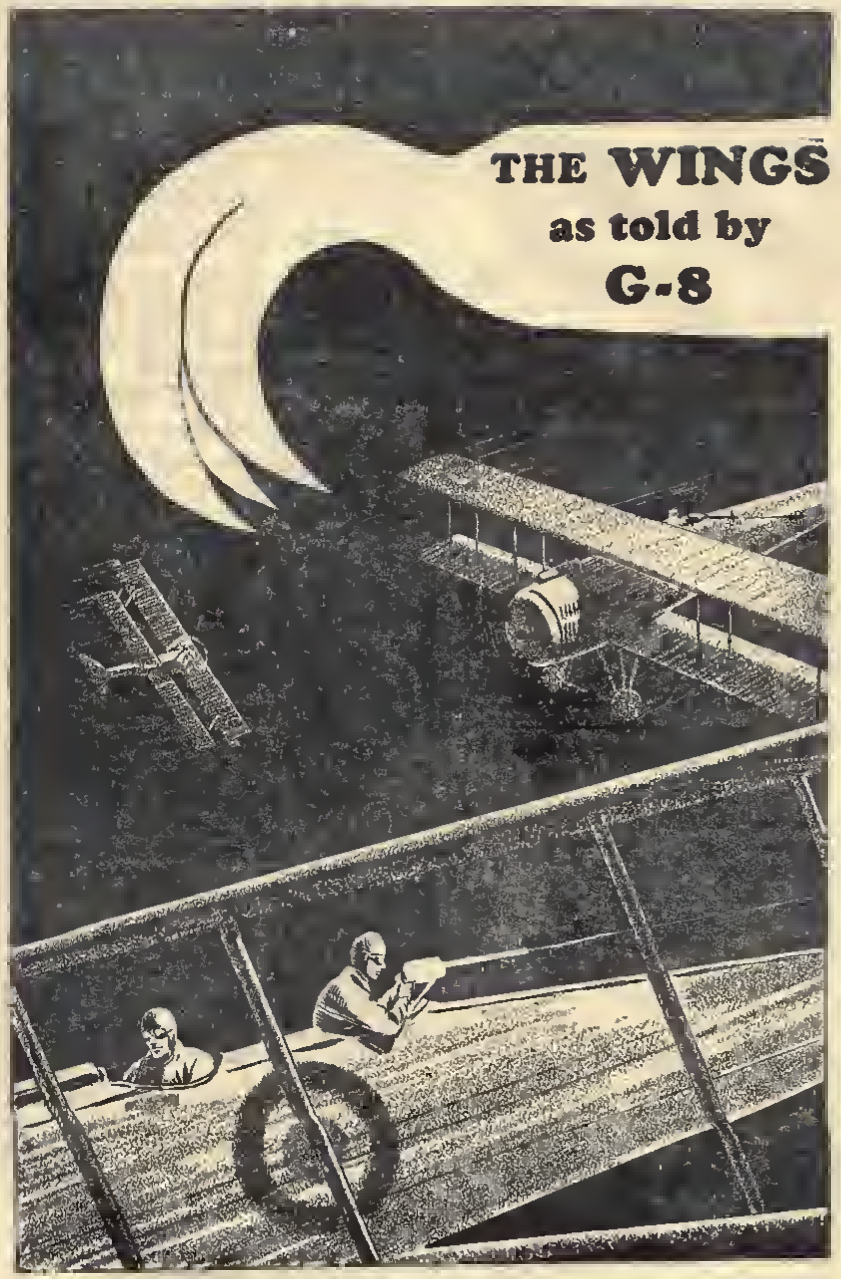
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THE WINGS OF THE IRON CLAW

as told by G-8

to ROBERT J. HOGAN

CHAPTER ONE

Herr Goulon's Hate

HIS voice came in a rasping croak, as though his throat were only part human, and the other part was frog.

"I have studied victory and control by terror. Most outstanding was my visit to Japan. There, *meine Herren,* is the greatest example of control through fear and terror. In the Mashi Prison, I saw—"

"One moment, Herr Goulon," the Hun general on his left interrupted.

The crippled beast-man shot an enraged glance at the enquiring general. His sunken, bloodshot eyes became horribly fierce and cruel.

"I assume that your study of terror began with your hatred for a certain American spy?" the general suggested. "I refer to the man known as G-8."

At the mention of that name the hatred in the ghastly face increased tenfold. His croaking voice became a snarl; more than ever like the sound that an animal might make.

"You see in me, *meine Herren,* one to frighten strong men at sight. You know my story, perhaps. This same—this cursed *verdammter Hund,* G-8, shot me down in flames and then, in a hospital of the *Amerikaner* swine, I was purposely made ghastly—as I am now."

Another German general at the other side of the table asked, "You are sure of that? You are certain that the American doctors made you a cripple on purpose? It could not have been the accident and the flames that disfigured and crippled you? You have proof?"

"Proof?" the maniac screamed. "You want proof? Then look at me. Would anyone believe that I could live in such a condition unless I were made so on the operating table? Look at my left leg, twisted and shorter than the other. Look upon my face, if you can. There was not enough skin left, they said, to cover my face, so they drew it tighter. They drew it so tight that I am like a four-thousand-year-old mummy—with skin so tight that I cannot close my mouth. *Himmel!* You want proof? Look what they left me for a mouth. A gaping hole without lips that come together. And look at my left arm. Look at it!" His voice terminated in a shrill cry.

Herr Goulon stopped in his shrieking to pant for breath through the hole which was not a mouth and through the two openings in his flat nose that was not a human nose.

"See what they left me for an arm. A stump on which I have added my new hand!"

He waved his left arm about. At the end of the stub below the elbow was an iron shield that fitted over the stub. Welded to the iron sleeve, or shield, was his new hand.

It was a wicked thing, that new hand. A series of three hooks, like the claws of a giant cat. But these glistening polished iron claws were curved down, so that his movements made gouging gestures. Each of the three metal claws was sharpened on the inside of the curve to a keen razor-edge.

"With this," he shrilled, "I will yet tear the heart out of the *verdammter Hund!* He shall know, before he dies, the monster he made—"

"*Eine Minute,*" the general at his left interrupted. "You were speaking of the terror."

Herr Goulon paused, panting for breath again in his furious excitement. "The terror," he breathed. "*Jawohl.*" He was forcing himself to have respect for these generals about the table. He took time to compose himself and then he began again in a voice that still retained the croak, but was more subdued.

"*Meine Herren—bitte,* you will pardon my—my enthusiasm for my plan. The terror. *Jawohl.*"

He took more time to compose himself. With a handkerchief he wiped the drooling from the gaping hole in his face. Now he placed the handkerchief back in his pocket and, placing the hooks of his left arm and his right hand onto the edge of the table, he leaned forward a little and began.

"Have you ever considered, *meine Herren,* what might take place in the mind of a soldier of any nation, were he to learn that the doctors and nurses who would care for him if wounded, had been taken away and could no longer serve his medical needs?"

He straightened, and his sunken, bloodshot eyes flashed from the face of one general to another. Their expressions seemed rather satisfactory, and he went on.

"That is my plan, Excellencies. We will dispose of the doctors and nurses of the Allies, slowly at first, then more rapidly. We will begin our reign of terror by taking away first those agents who could make our future victims well again."

A LARGE man, wearing a general's uniform, leaned forward at the far end of the table, his heavy brows knit together in a puzzled expression.

"Just how do you expect to accomplish this, Herr Goulon?"

The beast tried to grin, and the effort sent a shudder through his audience.

"This would be the simplest part of my proposed plan," he said. "I already have an army of specially trained and equipped agents who can on ten minutes notice slip into Allied territory and begin their work. The work of these men will be thorough, you may depend upon it. I have spent a long time selecting them. I have been preparing them ever since—I became what I am."

"But how are they to get into France, these many agents of yours?"

"That," Goulon grinned hideously, "is my secret for the moment. I have worked that out. Except for a few chosen men, no one knows of my method for enabling my men to cross the battle lines—and I must insist on keeping my secret. The method is mine—I devised it, and it shall be used only for my own purposes. All I ask of your Excellencies is the permission to go ahead, and the backing of the *Vaterland* in whatever I may deem necessary."

"You have not entirely answered my question," the inquiring general insisted. "It will not be so simple to do away with the doctors and nurses of the Allies."

Herr Goulon made a cackling sound which was meant for laughter. It didn't impel his listeners to join him, but he promised them, "You will laugh also, when I tell you."

The others averted their faces—and Goulon's laughter died. A savage look crossed the malformed features—disappeared.

"Very well," he said quietly. "You have heard all you are going to hear. The plan is mine—its enjoyment appears to belong to me, as well. That is all I have to say."

They looked at him and at each other, anxious but doubtful, and Herr Goulon smiled hideously. Finally one of them leaned forward and demanded, "Might I make one small suggestion, Herr Goulon?"

"*Jawohl,* Excellency," Goulon said more politely than he felt.

"Let us put it this way," the general on his left suggested, glancing at the other commanders. "This American spy, G-8, has already bested you in two engagements, Herr Goulon. You were fortunate to get off both times with your life. We have no guarantee that he may not best you a third time in this venture—and that this time you may not live—"

Out of the caverns of the lost came the sinister beast-men of Herr Goulon, Hunland's Ace Master of Murder—and to save the world he was fighting for, the Ace American Flying Spy had to undertake a solo—beyond the gravel

The taut skin on the face of Herr Goulon had rapidly darkened to a deep purple and his eyes were redder than ever.

"You may be sure—" he began, his voice rising to a screech.

"*Eine Minute,*" the general cut in. "I was about to add that in that unfortunate instance—we shall be helpless to continue your plan. Let us stipulate, then, that the first step of your plan must be to put G-8 out of the way. To kill him any way you please. After that, I believe I may safely say that you will have the sanction and even the blessing of the high command." He glanced at the other generals. "Are we agreed, gentlemen?"

Heads nodded presently in agreement and voices rumbled in assent.

Herr Goulon stood glaring, purple-faced, at the end of the table. He raised the wicked three-pronged claw of his left arm.

"Very well, *meine Herren,*" he croaked.

"I shall perform the execution within the next twenty-four hours." He held the iron claw higher as a token. "I shall tear the swine to shreds—and it will be the greatest pleasure of my life."

CHAPTER TWO

Death at Dawn

AT THAT moment, the man for whom Herr Goulon held so much bitter hatred braked his car at the end hangar at Le Bourget Field north of Paris.

This young American who was known only by the letter and number, G-8, had been in conference in Paris with the only superior he was compelled to recognize, the Yanks' commander in chief, and was now bringing the results of that conference to the airfield at Le Bourget, where his Battle Aces awaited him.

With an easy movement, G-8 slipped from the low, powerful roadster that the Army had placed at his disposal and strode across the concrete floor of the great end hangar, past several Spads and toward a door at the other side. Opening that door, he passed into the quarters that he and his Battle Aces called both headquarters and home.

It was a comfortable apartment built as part of the end hangar. As he entered the apartment, a low growl greeted him, like the roar of a lion. For an instant he froze, and instinctively his hand went to the big Colt automatic at his side.

The roar came again. He had it generally located now. It came from the direction of the kitchen. There was a scurry of feet and a deep bellowing voice growled, "You crazy little squirt, this time I'll choke all the tricks out of you."

More struggling and then a lighter, higher-pitched voice:

"You've got to catch me first, you big ox."

G-8 strode across the living room. As he pushed open the kitchen door, there was a crash as if the kitchen utensil department of a department store had been blasted by a bomb.

A dozen pots and pans littered the floor in the path of a roaring giant who was making a stumbling charge through the wreckage at a smaller man.

"Come on, you big ox," the smaller man cried. "Right through the middle of the line."

He was Nippy Weston, the terrier ace who flew Spad number 13 and could laugh in the face of the devil or Death.

The big fellow stumbled, lost his footing and went crashing flat on his face among the rattling, crashing pots and pans. The powerful, bull-necked, iron-jawed young man was another of G-8's Battle Aces. He was Bull Martin, former All-American halfback. Bull Martin, who at times felt he could lick the whole German Army with his bare fists but who flew Spad number 7 because he figured seven was his lucky number, and he could use all the luck he could get.

Bull leaped to his feet with a roar and charged—right into the arms of G-8—for Nippy Weston had ducked under G-8's arm and gone racing into the living room beyond.

He hung there panting for an instant and then another voice reached them. It was the English accent of Battle, master of the make-up kit and general manservant, besides being one of the flying four.

"I say, what's happened—"

His face was bland, his feet showed bare under his long nightshirt.

"Two bombs," G-8 grinned, "one named Nippy and the other named Bull, landed squarely in your kitchen, Battle."

"Let me get that squirt," Bull Martin raved.

G-8 laughed. "Take it easy, Bull. We're going to be needed at the front tomorrow at sunrise. Don't murder Nip until after that show."

Bull grew calmer. "No kidding. We get a crack at Heinie?"

"The night is clear tonight," G-8 said, "and the weather report is fair for tomorrow. So it looks as if the show were on at dawn."

Nippy came drifting back toward the kitchen door. "No kidding. We really get something to do tomorrow? I haven't had my hand on the stick of old 13 since it started raining horses and cows three days ago. Think the field will be dry enough?"

"We'll take off on the apron tomorrow morning," G-8 said. "You'll take the extra Spad, Battle and we'll all go."

"Okay. What's the dope on the operation?" Bull asked.

"You've known about that," G-8 said. "Nothing much changed from the original plan. G.H.Q. has decided we've got to take Hills 243 and 244. It means a lot of fighting. The Germans are firmly entrenched on both objectives. The general says we'll have heavy losses in getting those hills, but we've got to have them. Those hills are holding up our entire operations along that sector."

G-8 paused, then went on, "I hate to see a drive like this. It's bad enough when we expect normal losses, but these are going to be more than that. The general phoned the hospital head of this entire area to expect heavy reception of wounded. He wants to be sure they're prepared to take care of the stretcher casualties."

They were silent for a moment, then Bull said, "Yeah—when you stop to think a lot of the boys that are sleeping right now will be asleep forever by tomorrow night—"

Nippy pulled out his handkerchief and handed it to Bull. "Here, you big ape—cry in this. What do you want to do, live forever?"

G-8 stripped off his coat and started for his bedroom.

"I'm hitting the hay," he said. "We get up at four-thirty and get a good breakfast inside us. We don't know when we'll get a decent chance to eat again. Good night."

IT WASN'T much after four in the morning when water in the showers began sputtering. From the kitchen came the odor of bacon frying and coffee boiling.

One by one, G-8 and his Battle Aces met in the living room. They were silent, tense, keyed-up for action. Battle's unruffled voice, announcing breakfast, almost startled them—then broke the tension.

Nippy Weston, his eyes on Bull Martin said, "You know what you always act like at breakfast, Bull. You act like you'd been dreaming all night of starving to death—and still believed it."

"Why shouldn't I eat?" Bull retorted. "I'm man-sized. A squirt like you can't



hold more than a half-slice of toast, a sip of coffee and a hunk of bacon. You should talk, you fox terrier."

G-8 wasn't paying attention to the bantering. He sipped his coffee and ate his toast thoughtfully; then rose and, going to the door that opened into the storage end of the hangar, called to his mechanic sergeant, "Better fill our racks with bombs. We'll want to unload them on the fortifications on those two German hills."

He came back and sat down. Nippy turned to his chief. "Is that what we're going to do—lay a few eggs on the hill Heinies?"

"For a starter," G-8 said.

He finished his breakfast in silence, as though he had a presentiment of what was coming, without being sure.

Battle left the dishes in the kitchen. He joined them, pulling on his flying togs as he came out onto the tarmac.

The eastern sky was growing brighter by the time they went to the field. Four Spads were ticking over on the line, engines warming. The first was Battle's extra Spad, then came Spad number 13 that Nippy Weston so defiantly flew, and next Spad number 7 that Bull hoped would always bring him luck. Last, there stood G-8's Spad.

They walked to their respective chargers and climbed into their cockpits. G-8 waved the others away and one by one they taxied down to the end of the apron for the take-off.

He watched them go roaring by and rise against a lightening sky. Once they were in the air, he kicked his Spad around and taxied rapidly down to the end of the apron for his own take-off. His hand was on the throttle. He gunned the His-

so and, pushing the stick forward to lift the weight of the tail for the turn, he kicked rudder.

The Spad shuddered and spun around in a sharp turn, picking up speed down the tarmac.

Suddenly, above the roar of the Spad, came another sound—a croaking, rasping hellow—and something not human came charging at him from the grass at the edge of the field.

For an instant, G-8 froze. There wasn't time to give his Hisso the gun and pull away from this monster thing. He saw a gaping hole where a mouth should have been, red, bloodshot sunken eyes and a three-pronged metal claw that flailed at him desperately. He saw the drawn skin on a face contorted in hideous hate as the metal claw caught at one of his wing struts—held on.

He knew an instant's shocked, incredulous recognition as he fought the lurching Spad, and then, with incredible agility, the creature had swung onto the wing, grasped the side of the cockpit.

G-8's hand flashed for his gun, but the three-pronged hook was over his head, ready to descend.

"One move and I tear off your face!"

G-8 froze.

His dazed mind was still struggling with the incredulous realization that this monstrous creature was a man—a man he had once seen die—

G-8 didn't speak. He raised startled eyes to the sky for a farewell look at his comrades—and saw a flight of German planes!

Nippy and Bull and Battle were engaging them. No, one of the Spads was coming over to see why he didn't take off. . . .

The monster screamed again, "I'll kill you—"

G-8 grabbed for his automatic and at the same time he lunged his head and shoulders toward the beast-man, instead of away from him.

The hooks missed his head and imbedded themselves in his shoulder. But something hard—the iron sleeve or cup that held the hooks to the arm stub—struck him in the head with terrific force.

The daylight faded—all light and sound vanished, and total unconsciousness took possession of the Master Spy.

CHAPTER THREE

Beast-Man

ALMOST the full attention of Battle, Bull and Nippy had been centered at the time of their take-off on getting into the air and heading toward the front and their objectives.

But scarcely had Nippy lifted his wheels off the ground and sighted his eyes along the nose of his Spad 13 when he had spotted enemy planes roaring in out of the north. His first thought had been startled curiosity—had the enemy known about their plan to attack hills 243 and 244?

From the way the enemy planes came thundering over now, it was evident that they were hurrying to cut down the rising Spads. Bull and Battle lunged to the counter attack, and soon Vickers and Spandaus chattered in discordant fury.

Nippy Weston turned back to cover G-8's take-off, his hands and feet automatically working the controls of Spad 13. The battle-scarred crate shuddered in a vertical bank—and then he was streaming back for a closer look, his eyes narrowed in surprise.

It seemed to him that a second figure had leaped onto the side of G-8's plane. Whether or not the figure was threatening, he couldn't tell because of the dim morning light, the ground haze and the distance. And then metal glinted in the early morning light over G-8's head, and Nippy swore. He sent the Spad into a screaming dive, scarcely believing his eyes. The thing clinging to the wing of the moving plane below took monstrous shape—he caught a glimpse of hideous features, of a gleaming claw that descended toward G-8's head.

G-8 slumped over, either killed by the blow or stunned.

Nippy Weston yelled and crouched behind his Vickers gun sights—but it was too great a risk. He didn't dare take the chance. A slug might hit G-8—there was no way of telling whether the Master Spy was dead or not.

The figure on the plane wing turned his ghastly face and stared up for an instant. Then, afraid that Nippy would fire, he yanked G-8's limp body half out of

the cockpit and held it before him while Nippy continued to dive on him.

From behind the Terrier Ace came the rattle of Spandau lead. At least one of those Fokkers was riding his tail. He zigzagged, spun round in his seat, and his eyes caught the Fokker behind and the line of tracers, ribboned in a yellow haze.

He pulled up an instant before his nose plowed the earth beside G-8's ship. He climbed for room to chandelle. The Fokker sent a burst of slugs through his right wing, and kept them coming closer to the cockpit.

Furiously, Nippy lashed the stick the other way, half-rolled, pulled out of that maneuver and came yowling down on the tail of the Fokker as it cut out to turn back at him.

The terrier ace crouched behind his sights. Everything depended on him now. Bull and Battle were hard-pressed, a mile or so to the north. Only he could settle with that hook-handed devil.

He watched his white tracers missing the cockpit of the maneuvering Fokker by inches. He tried frantically at the last moment to correct his aim by a movement of the stick, but the German pilot was too fast and skillful.

He rolled out from under, got on top again. Before the terrier ace could maneuver out of the way, another burst of Spandau slugs came tearing through his other wing.

Furiously, Nippy turned directly into the path of the enemy pilot, taking the chance of a collision. The German swung away wildly and Nippy made a quarter turn, swift and tight and steep—and his Vickers lined up, straight and true.

HE PRESSED the triggers, grinning, as he saw the white tracer ribbons slash out into the clear morning air and vanish into the cockpit of the Fokker. He grinned and then, when the pilot of the enemy crate slumped and black smoke belched from the cockpit, he whirled to look down.

There was a limp form lying at the end of the apron and down the tarmac a Spad went racing at full throttle, trying to get



into the air. Someone on the ground was firing.

Nippy could hear the barking of a gun even above the roar of his Hisso. Then he saw a mechanic sergeant firing with his Colt automatic at the racing Spad; and that meant that G-8 wasn't in the cockpit! It meant that the crumpled figure, lying face down in a heap at the end of the apron, was G-8.

A surge of boiling fury seized Nippy Weston. He battered the throttle of his Spad wide open and charged in pursuit. Glancing ahead, he saw the dogfight that Bull and Battle had taken on, shaping up into a victory for them. One Fokker had crashed and another was going down, pocketed by the two Spads. The third Spad was hightailing for home.

Bull and Battle had been too busy to look back and see what had happened over the field, but now they must help with the fleeing madman in G-8's plane. Somehow, Nippy must contact them. The need became urgent as the Spad below lifted—the bullet-battered Number 13 was no match for G-8's Spad. And under his anxiety, Nippy had the same ghastly suspicion G-8 had had—the monster had seemed strangely familiar.

Of course Goulon was dead. Nippy kept telling himself that. And dead men simply don't steal planes and fly off with them—but Nippy couldn't repress a chill. . . . He tried to keep his mind on the set-up ahead. Herr Goulon—if it was he—was flying G-8's plane—and Battle and Bull wouldn't suspect who it was! Goulon might take them by surprise—they wouldn't suspect anything until the Vickers guns of G-8's Spad had drilled them both. He must try to get word of warning to them somehow.

He pressed the triggers of his twin Vickers guns, but no luck. Goulon was off the ground now and climbing. Nippy's dive was gaining on him, but he was still a long way off. The Fokker that now was a burning wreck at the south boundary of the field had taken Nippy below the field.

There seemed to be nothing to do but give his best and trust to luck. He turned back once to glance at the field. An ambulance had reached G-8. A lump rose in his throat, and then anger welled in him, a blind, pounding rage. He punched the throttle to see if he couldn't get a little more speed out of number 13. The fact that he was diving and Goulon was climbing helped a little—brought them closer.

Bull and Battle had turned back and were circling, waiting for G-8's plane to catch up with them. Nippy suppressed a groan. He was a good five hundred yards out of range.

Nippy settled low in his seat, barely peering over the edge of the cockpit, as if that would give him the extra mile or so an hour that he so badly needed.

He and Goulon leveled almost simultaneously, and the German was heading straight for Battle and Bull. He was clever enough to realize that if he tried to break for Germany, G-8's Aces might grow suspicious. So he had decided to go straight to them and fight it out, with the element of surprise strongly in his favor.

Nippy was sure he had gained a little space. He might still be two or three hundred yards out of good range. He had a bare chance of hitting the speeding plane—one chance in a thousand if he allowed for the trajectory. . . .

He took careful aim and waited another second. He pressed his triggers and his straining eyes tried to push those tracer ribbons farther out front before they died away. The ribbons didn't reach the fleeing Spad. They died out yards before they reached their objective.

He tried again, straining forward with all his might, as though a prayer on the tail of each bullet might make it go farther. . . .

Watching Bull and Battle, he hoped mightily that they would take warning. Couldn't they see that he was firing on that Spad? Wouldn't they think something was wrong if they noticed that? Wouldn't they be on their guard as the G-8 Spad came ever nearer?

Suddenly, his heart skipped a beat and then seemed to stop altogether. Herr Goulon was within range now and he opened fire. Nippy could see the white tracer streaks lashing out—a puff of black smoke leapt out and formed a cloud along one side of Battle's Spad.

Battle was hit. The bland-faced Briton, loyal to the last, was turning and going down, slipping to drive the smoke and the flame from him.

And now Herr Goulon had turned. He was charging at Bull in Spad number 7.

CHAPTER FOUR

G-8 Is Dead!

NIPPY clamped down on his triggers. He let his Vickers guns go mad for vengeance. They hurled long futile streamers of white tracer smoke out ahead, but the lines died away before their slightly arching course could reach the racing Spad.

Bull had turned, meanwhile, and was throttling back to come into formation. Apparently he hadn't seen the demon in the Spad shoot down Battle's ship.

Now the attack was on in full; tracers lashed out from the Vickers guns of Herr Goulon. Then, Bull whirled his Spad away at last, and came around in a steep bank, obviously bewildered.

Herr Goulon could have followed him up and given it to him. But he didn't. Apparently, Goulon was interested mainly in getting through. He went racing for Germany. Bull finished his turn too late to catch him in his sights.

Nippy yelled futilely, "Go after him, Bull. Get him!"

His words were wasted on the air and space, but Nippy kept going. And now Bull, belatedly, caught on. They chased the German over the front lines, but although Bull tried several times, as they crossed the front, to blast slugs into that Spad, he was too late. Nippy, being farther behind, simply wasted his ammunition.

A flight of seven Fokkers loomed out of the German sky ahead of them. But the Spads were low on gasoline and ammunition by now, and there was nothing for them to do but turn back.

Bull landed at Le Bourget as soon as he could get in. Nippy roared back to the south side of the field and circled the spot where G-8 had been lying when he left. There was no sign of anything on the end of the apron. No sign, even, of blood.

That gave the terrier ace a little hope.

When he landed, Battle came limping out of the hangar. Bull was with him. The big fellow was grinning.

"They're okay, both of them," he said. "G-8's come around and the doc says he's doing fine."

Nippy took a long breath. "Sure glad something good happened this morning," he admitted. "We thought you were a goner, Battle."

Battle said, "I'm afraid I would have agreed with you, sir, a few moments ago. However, I managed to get my plane down without damage."

"What about your leg?" Nippy demanded.

Bull grinned. "After the guy gets his plane down without letting it burn up, he turns his ankle climbing out of his cockpit."

"What I want to know," Nippy demanded, "is why you didn't blast that guy Herr Goulon out of the sky when he came at you."

"I was kind of slow on the up-take," Bull admitted. "I didn't see Battle shot out of the sky. I heard the shooting and was looking around to see where it was coming from and I missed Battle's getting shot up. When I turned again and saw him going down, trailing smoke, I took another look around to find the Hun that had shot him. I still didn't figure out G-8's ship did it. What happened, anyway?"

Nippy told him what he'd seen and Bull's eyes widened.

"What's this about Herr Goulon?"

"I thought we finished him—" Battle was equally bewildered.

"We all thought so," Nippy said, "but if Herr Goulon was killed in that explosion, then he's got a burned-up twin brother. Boy, what an ugly buzzard he turned out to be. And," Nippy's voice rose in anger, "you could have stopped him, you big ape, if you hadn't taken too much for granted. If you'd worried about Battle instead of your own hide when you heard that firing, you'd have seen who shot him down.

The terrier ace turned to Battle. "Can I see G-8? Have they got him at the hospital?"

Bull cut in with, "No visitors. The hospital surgeon sent word that he'll be all right. They're holding him for observation."

"But he'll be down for lunch, sir," Battle said. "They promised that." He disap-

peared in the direction of the kitchen.

BULL looked reproachfully at Nippy. "Listen, squirt," he said. "You don't honestly think I'd let that guy get back to Germany on purpose, do you?"

Nippy forced a grin. "Sure, I know," he said. "But you can't blame a guy for being disappointed at the buzzard getting back. It would have been so simple for you to smear him if—"

"Sure, I know," Bull said, "but—" he shrugged. "What's the use of trying to tell you anything."

Nippy lifted his helmet and scratched his head. "There's one thing I can't figure out," he said. "When you turned away from him he could have cut in and plastered you all over the landscape. But instead, he ducked straight for Germany and let you chase him, almost within range."

Bull thought that one over for a long moment and agreed. "I thought that was queer, too," he said. "Guess I just figured I had a lucky break. I didn't think beyond that." He looked dejected. "Maybe a new brain would help," he admitted sheepishly.

"Maybe what you need is a brain, period." Nippy grinned and chucked the big fellow in the ribs with his elbow. "I'm only kidding, Bull. Forget it. I'd have done the same thing, likely, if it had been me."

Bull looked at his little pal curiously. "What's got into you, Nip? That's the first time you've admitted you might be an ordinary human being in a long time."

Nippy shrugged. "Guess seeing the chief and Battle coming so close to getting it makes things seem more serious than usual."

An ambulance brought G-8 down in time for lunch. His head was still bandaged but he was sitting up beside the driver and he got out under his own power. He walked calmly between Nippy and Bull who had met him on the tarmac.

He grinned at the concerned expressions of the two. "I'm okay. Just a clout on the head, and I've had plenty of them before. I'm lucky Goulon didn't get his claws into me."

At lunch, he told what he remembered of the attack. There wasn't so much. What troubled him was what lay behind Goulon's strange attack.

They were nearly through lunch when Battle answered a knock at the living room door. L-9 from Intelligence came in. He was a quick little man with glasses who looked as though he might have just stepped out of a downtown haberdashery shop.

"This is an unusual pleasure, G-8," he said, and he held out his hand to the Master Spy. "Did you know you were dead?"

"Dead?" G-8 demanded.

"In Germany," L-9 said, "they are at this moment celebrating your death. Two of our resident spies have already wirelessed us to get the lowdown."

Nippy and Bull were both looking at G-8 curiously. The latter had made light of his injuries—now they thought his escape must have been closer than they had imagined. Goulon had reported him dead—and Goulon, in their experience, had seldom made a mistake—unless he did it deliberately.

G-8 frowned. "Do you have copies of the reports?"

"Yes," L-9 said. He drew them from his pocket. "This is the first we received and deciphered. It came about an hour ago. The second one came about fifteen minutes afterward."

G-8 scanned the first message, then read it aloud.

> There is a report that G-8 is dead. One Herr Goulon is reported to have killed him at Le Bourget Field and then to have escaped back to Germany. Please confirm or deny.

The other message read:

> G-8 reported killed. Herr Goulon, once known as the Cripple of Hartsburg, has brought proof that he killed G-8. He has flown back from Le Bourget Field in G-8's own Spad. He was pursued for more than fifty miles inside Germany by G-8's squadron, Spads number 7 and 13.

Nippy Weston snapped his fingers suddenly.

"Bull, I've got it. That's why Herr Goulon didn't stay to finish you off. He wanted you and me both to chase him into Germany to confirm his report."

Bull told G-8, "This bird seems to have

a special reason for wanting his pals to think you are dead."

The telephone on the wall jangled and G-8 answered it.

"Yes, General," he said. "Yes, sir. Quite all right. As soon as my head clears a little more I'll be as good as ever. Yes, sir . . . Late this afternoon . . . This evening? . . . Very well . . . Of course . . . I'll be down, sir . . . At your office, this evening . . . Thanks."

CHAPTER FIVE

Claws in the Night

NIPPY, Bull and Battle waited expectantly as G-8 hung up the receiver and turned.

"What's the bad news now?" Nippy demanded.

G-8 shrugged. "Nothing, yet," he said. "At least the general didn't mention any. He wanted to have a talk with me this evening and I told him I'd be down. He's going to have the surgeon general down there and wants me to meet him and answer some questions."

"I'd sure feel a lot better if I could get one question answered," Bull Martin growled. "I'd like to know just what Goulon has up his sleeve."

"Amazing," Nippy snapped. "That stuff that fills your skull must be brains, and I always thought it was sawdust."

Bull jerked his head toward his little pal and said with a wink to G-8, "Look. The loony thinks I'm nuts!"

"Loony!" Nippy exploded, but G-8 interrupted him.

"Take it away, you two," G-8 said. "I'm going to lie down this afternoon and see if I can't get my own bean to clear up a little."

It was late in the afternoon, just before dinner, when G-8 appeared again. He had removed the bandage, and Battle worked on his head. He looked as though nothing of a serious physical nature had ever happened to him.

Glancing at his wrist watch, he said, "Well, I'll be shoving off."

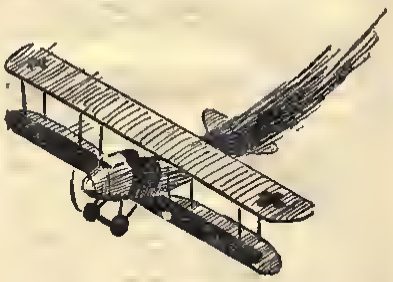
He drove swiftly through the twilight into Paris, and went straight to the general's offices and stepping in, saluted smartly. The general looked up quickly from his desk and answered his salute. G-8 said, "Good evening, General. I hope I'm not too early."

There was another man in the room, and at first G-8 was startled at the resemblance between the two. Then he noticed the medical insignia on the latter's collar—the surgeon general.

The Yank commander at the desk said, "You're just on time, G-8. This is General Greer, Surgeon General of the Medical Corps."

G-8 advanced and shook hands with the surgeon general.

General Greer resembled the great Yank commander only when he was seated. Now that he stood up, G-8 could see that he was shorter than the Yank commander.



The window was open behind him and the breeze that blew in from over the lower Paris housetops rippled the papers on the desk.

General Greer placed a paper weight upon them and said, turning back to G-8, "I'm more than glad you've come, G-8. I had a little problem that your commander assured me you could help clear up."

The Yank commander stood with a slight smile on his face.

General Greer didn't smile. This was no joke with him.

"I hope," G-8 ventured, "that I won't have to prove that, General Greer."

The Yank commander smiled a little more broadly. "G-8 is modest about his successes, General Greer," the commander said. "He has never failed us yet."

GENERAL GREER drew a small piece of folded paper from his pocket and handed it to G-8. "This was found on

the surgeon major's desk at base hospital headquarters here in Paris early this morning."

G-8 unfolded the small piece of paper and glanced at the writing. The words were English, but the hand was a cramped German script.

> You and your staff are given warning. Give up your jobs today or you will die a horrible death.

There was no signature.

G-8's eyes narrowed as he looked up at Greer. "What is the name of the surgeon major?" he asked.

"Major Bradley," General Greer said.

G-8 looked puzzled. "That's funny," he said. "There seems to be something that ties things together here, but I can't grasp it, Major Bradley." He shook his head. "I haven't heard the name before, and yet—"

The Yank commander said, "Because of this warning, General Greer has had to reorganize his staff."

G-8's eyes widened. "You mean, General Greer, that you actually take some stock in this warning note?"

The general said, "I don't like to appear childish but we've reason to believe there's something behind this note. There have been unexplained—and in some cases, inexplicable—accidents, and the staff is jittery. They're brave men and women, or they wouldn't be here, but they're worried. And right now, with our offensive under way, we need all available doctors and nurses, and we need them in the best mental and physical shape of their careers."

"I understand," G-8 said. "I won't hold you up in your work any longer and I hope I can get something more definite on this warning note, sir."

The Yank commander said, "Come into the next office, please."

They passed into the office at the side and the Yank general closed the door.

"At first," he said in a low voice, "I felt that General Greer was exaggerating the importance of this warning. We have all sorts of wounded and shell-shocked men who have been in our hospitals and then have been released after treatment. It's always possible that one may have developed a warped hatred for some hospital attendant—or even against the hospital itself. That was what I felt when I phoned you earlier today."

"It didn't seem to me that you were particularly excited about anything, sir," G-8 said.

"However," the commander went on, "Since then General Greer has all but convinced me that something is wrong. And if he should prove right, the results may prove horrible. Our casualties are heavier than ever. If it were possible to conceive an enemy so inhuman as to strike at our wounded behind the lines—this would be the ideal time for such an attack."

G-8 lighted a cigarette and then he shook his head perplexedly.

"I wish," he said, "that I could get what seems to stick vaguely in the back of my mind. That Major Bradley. There's something about him and his name that—"

G-8 broke off short and leaped to his feet. From the next office—the office where they had left the surgeon general, came a ghastly cry. It was a stifled, choking scream. . . .

CHAPTER SIX

Beast-Maker

G-8 MADE a lunge for the door, tore it open and dashed through. General Greer lay on the floor, horribly slashed. His face, neck and chest were torn to ribbons. The furniture in the room gave evidence of almost unbelievable violence.

The desk lay on its side and behind General Greer was the toppled desk chair. G-8's eyes flashed to the open window beyond.

He had caught a sudden gleam of something on the window sill. It was gone now, but it had lingered there for an instant before vanishing into the night.

He heard the Yank commander groan even as he leaped for the light switch and flipped it off.

The room plunged into semi-darkness, with a little light seeping through the door from the inner office. G-8 saw with satisfaction that the section of the outer office by the open window was particularly dark. He lunged for the window, and then, with-



G-8 FROZE IN HORROR AS THE GLEAMING CLAW CAME CLOSER. . . .

out the slightest hesitation, slipped over the sill. Silently he slid into the dark pocket of the alley below.

His feet touched the paving lightly. He could hear the confusion in the room above. The Yank commander was calling for help, yelling for someone to turn on the light.

Then, as G-8 squared himself and braced for any attack that might come out of the night, the light splashed about him from the window above.

He could see now, but dimly. He was alone, but some distance away a figure was running, softly as a cat.

G-8 only caught a glimpse of the other as he rounded the back of the great headquarters building, but the Master Spy knew the layout of the grounds back there. There was a board fence. . . .

Without hesitation, G-8 dashed after the other. He ran with all the speed he could force into his legs; yet he was silent as a ghost. He reached the rear of the building in time to see the foot of the man vanish over the fence.

G-8 followed. He went up and over the fence without a sound. His quick eyes took in the dim view from the top of the barricade. The man ahead was doubled over and running between two houses, heading for the back streets.

He reached the street in time to see the other vanish around a corner.

G-8 didn't hesitate. It was apparent

that the murderer knew he was being followed. Then, ducking low, G-8 charged ahead once more.

THE thing hit him with the force of a battering ram. G-8 was hurled back by the blow. He landed on his side and with a roar, a black object came charging him like a savage bull.

There was a little light coming from a dim street lamp across the street, and by that scant illumination he saw something that surprised him. His assailant seemed to have curved talons on each hand. He could see their gleam as the monstrous shape came slashing at him.

He struggled to his feet, stumbled, went down scrambling as the dark shape hurtled by, those curved claws missing him.

It was too dark for him to recognize his attacker. Frantically he tried, as he fell back from the charging beast-man, to figure how he might capture the maniac alive. The other's utter disregard for life made the Master Spy fight down a swift surge of panic. He'd have to pit his fists and his clubbed gun against those flailing claws.

The beast-man gave a savage leap. His body came hurtling through the air. G-8 caught his heel on the edge of the sidewalk; he realized, as he went down, that the death-dealing brute was going to land on top of him. The gouging hooks descended . . .

Almost automatically, G-8 reversed his drawn and clubbed Colt—his finger tightened reflexively and the weapon roared twice in fractional seconds. He rolled frantically, as the other came down on top of him, pinioning his arm—he was still struggling when he realized that the weight holding him down was inert, motionless.

He worked himself free, and heard a strangled groan from his erstwhile attacker. The other's shape twitched once and was still.

Heavy feet were pounding the sidewalk, not far away. A guard came running up from the front of the headquarters building.

"What—what is it, sir?"

He had his flashlight out and was blinding G-8 with it. The guard recognized him, saluted.

The Master Spy picked himself up, the warm automatic still in his hand.

"Not a word of this," he said. "Come on. Help me carry this bird back to headquarters building. Got to get a look at him before anybody else."

They picked up the unmoving form. He was surprisingly heavy. They carried him through the back yard of the house and then through a locked gate in the high board fence. The guard unlocked a back door of the building, and carried the body into the basement.

They were both a little out of breath when they laid the figure on the stone floor. It was dark in the basement, and G-8 decided against turning on lights. Once more he cautioned the guard as to secrecy.

"But I have to report," the doughboy guard objected. "I have to report to the officer of the guard—"

G-8 said, "I'll take any responsibility."

The guard hesitated. Then he said, "Yes, sir. Is there anything else I can do?"

"Just what I'm telling you," G-8 said. "Say nothing about this to anybody. This is your secret and mine. Now go back the way we came in, circle around, lock all doors behind you and return to your post. If you are asked, tell your commanding officer that you met G-8 and that G-8 said that the murderer had escaped."

The young Yank saluted. "Yes, sir."

The guard left. Alone, the Master Spy locked the door of the room where the body of the beast-man lay and went upstairs. He found the Yank commander with a number of medical officers. They were gathered around the body of General Greer.

The Yank commander shook his head. "He was almost dead by the time we got to him, G-8," he said. "I was waiting for you to get back. Did you find anything?"

G-8 shook his head. "The murderer got away. Never saw anyone move so swiftly and so quietly in my life. I lost out completely."

The general nodded to the others in his outer office.

"If G-8 doesn't want to make any further inspection of General Greer's body, you may take him out."

G-8 bent down for a moment over the prone, bloody figure. He studied the marks left by the steel claws; then stood up, nodded.

"I'm through," he said.

WHEN they were gone, he went back into the general's private office. He picked up the phone and called Le Bourget Field. When he had Nippy on the other end of the line he said, "Nippy, I want you to stay there. But tell Bull and Battle to come down as soon as they can to the general's office and tell Battle to bring the big make-up kit."

"They'll be right down if I have to ride them there in a wheelbarrow," Nippy promised.

When he hung up he found the general watching him keenly.

"There's something you have on your mind that you haven't mentioned yet," the general said.

"Nothing definite."

"Then what are you bringing Bull and Battle and the make-up kit down here for?"

"A plan—it's still quite vague in my mind, sir."

The Master Spy seemed to have his mind far away. He lit a cigarette and then, after taking a few puffs on it, snuffed it out quickly and turned.

"General, I've got to go quickly. I just remembered who Major Bradley is."

The general looked at him, bewildered.

"Major Bradley is the famous plastic surgeon—one of the best that we have."

"Naturally," the general said. "I could have told you that."

"Yes. I knew it," G-8 said hurriedly. "But he's a special one. We've been having trouble, as you know, with a German named Goulon. It was he or an agent of his who attacked and killed General Greer."

"I'm afraid I don't follow you," the general said. "My understanding has been that Goulon was dead—"

"I'll explain more later," G-8 said. "Herr Goulon was badly burned in a crash—after I shot him down a long time ago. Major Bradley was in the vicinity—he may have tried to put Goulon together again, without knowing Goulon's identity. There may have been a mix-up in records—something I've got to find out. It was Bradley who got the warning. It all ties up."

G-8 was at the door of the general's office.

"Call Major Bradley at once. Tell him to keep his doors and windows locked until I come. Tell him not to let anyone come in except with the pass word, 'Three'. Will you do that?"

G-8 didn't wait for any answer. He knew his chief. They could depend on each other.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Trap-Door to Hell

DOWN before headquarters building he found his long, low, powerful roadster waiting where he had left it. He leaped behind the wheel and started the engine. Roaring away from



the curb, he sent the car charging down the street in the direction of the base hospital.

No telling where he might find Major Bradley at this hour. He might be at the hospital and he might be at his living quarters.

Anyhow, most likely the hospital attendants could tell him where the major was.

A young medical lieutenant was in charge at the hospital desk when G-8 rushed in. The lieutenant looked a little surprised.

"I've got to find Major Bradley at once," G-8 said.

The lieutenant reached for a phone. "Is anything wrong?"

"Plenty! Where will I find Major Bradley?"

"You'll find him at his quarters. He said he would be there tonight if he were needed. He's at the building just west of this west hospital wing. It is where all

the medical officers of the hase hospital are quartered."

The lieutenant was white-faced; General Greer hadn't exaggerated when he said the hospital staff was jittery. He froze suddenly. From out of the night came a scream. The sound was short, choked—but the voice was a woman's.

"What—what was that?" the lieutenant whispered. His eyes were dilated, a little frantic.

"Where did it come from?" G-8 demanded.

"I—I don't know. I think—from the building housing the nurses."

"Where is that?"

"That's at the end of the east wing," the lieutenant said. "I'll send for—"

G-8 darted to the front door, then he whirled and headed for a wider, darker rear door. The amhulance entrance, he guessed. His hand was on his automatic as he lunged out into the enveloping darkness.

There was no sign of a living human being outside. He stood motionless for a moment, and then he heard another faint, muffled scream from the east.

For a perilous instant, he stood, trembling a little in excited indecision, then he whirled and raced, running lightly and silently toward the sound.

He reached the entrance, which was dark, and slipped inside. There was no sound now—no sign, even, of life inside the building. He stepped behind the desk and brought up short.

Behind the desk lay a uniformed figure, a corporal. G-8 snatched at his shoulder and turned the body over. There were horrible gashes across the corporal's throat and face and chest, where iron claws, in sets of three, had torn his flesh open to the bone.

G-8 turned away and ran his eyes over the switchboard. He found the name of Major Bradley and noted the number of the room: 345.

He raced up the stairs to the third floor. The hall was lighted only hy a single dim bulb at the far end. The other lights were broken. Here and there he saw smears of blood.

He reached the major's room and tried the door. It was locked. Drawing back, he sent his shoulder crashing into the door and it gave way. There was a light still burning in the room, hut he didn't need that to know what had happened. As he lunged into the room he stumbled over the fallen body of the major, lying like the others, in a red pool.

He snatched the phone from the major's desk and clicked the receiver. The line was dead—wires cut!

RUNNING at top speed, he raced down the two flights of stairs and out into the night again. He stood, panting a little, listening. Suddenly, he heard a slight crunching sound of a soft shoe on gravel. He froze into immohility under some overhanging shrubs, which half-screened him from the dim glow of the hospital building.

He saw a figure moving closer to him and in the tiny light that filtered from those few windows, he saw the same glint of shiny steel at the end of each arm of the man.

This, then, was an executioner—another one of the agents of Goulon—a multiple murderer who had done his joh and was leaving the scene of the crime.

G-8 remained motionless until the man, a big fellow, bent forward a little at the waist, had passed hy close enough to he touched. He waited until the glinting claws were gone and the figure had melted into the night.

Then, soundlessly, he took up the trail.

For fifty feet he moved on without seeing the fellow, guiding himself hy sound alone. His hand was on the butt of his automatic. He had seen what those claws could do. . . .

Rounding the corner of the wing, G-8 saw the figure and then almost immediately lost him again. But he had the course that the man had taken. He trailed on.

The man came ont on the back street behind the great base hospital. In the dim glint of a street lamp, G-8 saw him slip off something like a metal glove from each hand or fist. He wasn't near enough to see the claws clearly or the mechanisms hy which they were held to the wrists. He only knew that they were off and had been slipped into the man's pocket.

The killer made no effort to hide his presence now. G-8 noticed him take something from his face and realized that he

must have been wearing some sort of a mask. The light hadn't been bright enough when the fellow passed close to him earlier for G-8 to see his features.

A block up the street two other figures joined the man whom G-8 trailed. The presence of the three together satisfied G-8 that he had been right in following his prey, rather than exacting immediate vengeance. Still, if they discovered him, he would be in trouble—each of the trio was big—about the size of Bull Martin, or even larger.

They moved diagonally across the street and headed across an open park. G-8 was forced to fall back. There was not enough cover to hide him until they came almost to the middle of the park.

Once there, he could move faster. Something told him to look back. He did and just in time! Two figures, as large as those three men whom he trailed ahead, were coming behind. They were less than fifty yards behind G-8. Surely they had seen the Master Spy's figure moving in the darkness behind the others.

In the first clump of shrubbery, G-8 vanished, moving deep into the bushes. He heard the tread of feet of the other two as he waited and then they were almost upon him.

They were talking low as they passed. "*Sehr gut,*" said one voice. "This is my first night with the others. I left hurriedly tonight. The leader said you would tell me the password to get back to headquarters."

"*Ja.* The password—" G-8 strained his hearing, but missed what followed. The two men moved on, and this time he followed a few steps behind. If they turned—or he made a misstep—discovery was inevitable.

Their talk drifted back to him, and presently he caught the word—*gefangen.*

G-8 dropped back again. It was apparent from the repeated mention of the password that they were heading for the same place as the three ahead—some sort of rendezvous for Goulon's henchmen.

The Master Spy kept them in sight. They came to the monument in the center of the park and paused there. G-8 glanced about him for a split second to get his bearings. When he looked back, both men were gone.

The monument of La Bareau stood in the darkest, most densely shrubbed and wooded section of the park. G-8 stood waiting, half hidden by shrubbery. He waited for nearly ten minutes and then he moved back two short steps and crouched. Someone else was coming along the path.

The next man was alone. He was as large as the others. He walked swiftly to the monument, apparently very sure of himself, pausing barely enough to reach down. A trap-door swung silently open.

The door was round, larger than a manhole cover. The large man slipped from sight and the door closed again.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Bull Takes Over

THERE had not been many times in Bull Martin's career when he had a chance to be on his own. He had had his moments, of course, but he couldn't remember more than one or two occasions when G-8 had asked him directly to take over in his place. And no time had been quite like this. He faced his chief eagerly at headquarters—but there were interruptions.

The Yank commander slammed his phone and leaped from his chair. "For the love of Heaven, G-8! Do you know what's happened?"

"I have a pretty good idea," G-8 said. "Major Bradley is dead, as far as I can tell; many of his staff are dead, and the hospital, except for perhaps some of the night attendants, is pretty much unmanned."

"That's only part of it," the general said. He named three other hospitals that had suffered about the same fate in the last two hours. "This is the most cowardly thing I have ever heard of. . . ."

"I agree with you, sir," G-8 said.

The general seemed to be beside himself with inward agony. He bellowed, "Well, what are you doing about it? Where have you been?"

"I've been at the base hospital and in the park west of there," G-8 said. "I've learned enough to go ahead with my plans." He glanced at Battle. "I see you brought your make-up kit, Battle. That's

good. Let's go into the general's private office and begin our work on Bull." G-8 glanced about at several staff officers in the room. "No, wait, Battle. We'll find another place—"

The general stood before G-8, blocking his way.

"Wait a minute," the Yank commander said. "What's this all about? You may speak freely before my staff."

"Then perhaps they would be good enough to carry the murderer of General Greer up from the basement."

Half a dozen of the officers jumped at those words.

"Did I hear you say the murderer of General Greer?" the general demanded.

G-8 nodded. "I must ask for absolute secrecy. While I'm risking my own life and the lives of my assistants, I can't trust anyone. Until now I haven't made a complete report even to you; but since you demand it—" he shrugged.

"You will find the body in the number two storeroom in the basement. I shall make a more detailed explanation later."

Four officers left, taking the key G-8 handed them.

Bull said, "Look, chief—I don't have to play second fiddle to Nippy or anybody this time, right?"

"Right," G-8 said. "And I fervently hope that before you're through you don't wish you hadn't taken the job. You can back out now if you want and we won't think any the less of you."

"Whatever it is—I'll take it."

THE body was brought in. The four officers laid the gigantic form on the floor, the mask still over its face.

G-8 didn't remove the mask. He stood over the form and nodded to Bull. "Lie down beside him, Bull."

Bull gulped, but he stretched out on the floor and lay still beside the dead man. He said, gloomily, "I can imagine some of the cracks Nippy would make if he were here."

"You'll have plenty to worry about besides Nippy's cracks," G-8 warned. Then to the general, "You'll notice, sir, that this dead man is slightly larger than Bull Martin. All of the agents of Herr Goulon that I have seen are approximately of a size. I couldn't pass for any of them."

Bull looked pleading from the floor. "Can I get up from beside this bird now?"

G-8 grinned and nodded. "You can begin changing clothes with him any time you're ready." He turned back to the others.

"Lieutenant Martin will dress in the dead man's uniform. Then Battle will make up his face to look like the dead man. He'll return to the headquarters of these agents, work with them until he learns what I want to know, uncovers the extent of Goulon's scheme. Bull's got to do it because he's the only one big enough for the job, and they'd spot anyone smaller."

The room was silent for a moment as G-8 paused, then the Master Spy added, "You can see how very important it is that the news does not leak out that this agent has been killed. It would cost my assistant's life."

The general was still frowning. He said, "Am I to understand that you know where these agents have their headquarters?"

"Yes, sir," G-8 said. He added grimly, "I hope for your sake, Bull, that I have their password correct as well."

The Master Spy bent down now and lifted the mask off the face of the dead murderer.

One of the staff officers, a colonel, said, "If you know their headquarters, why don't we have our troops surround them and either capture or annihilate them?"

"Nothing as simple as that would net us Goulon, or his agents, Colonel," G-8 said.

Bull was about dressed in the beast-man's uniform, and Battle went to work on him with his make-up kit. While the Yank commander and his staff officers watched in amazement, Battle swiftly transformed Bull Martin's face from his own into one that was identical with the dead man's.

Battle and G-8 cleaned the blood marks off the uniform that Bull now wore. The bullet-holes were made to look like tears which Bull could easily explain. Then the Master Spy surveyed Bull and nodded with satisfaction.

"I think you'll do perfectly."

Bull felt not a little uncomfortable. He'd worked with G-8 long enough to have



learned all about impersonations. But now that he was on his own at last he wasn't too sure. His German wasn't perfect. But he didn't say anything.

"There's a mirror in my private office," the Yank general said.

Bull went in and some of the others followed him. He got a shock when he looked at himself. Then he shook himself and asked, "Got any idea what my name is?"

"You seem to be a number only," G-8 said. "Here are your identification papers. I took them from the pocket of the agent shortly after I shot him. You're Number One Hundred and Thirteen."

Bull winced. "Holy Herring, couldn't I have a number without a thirteen in it?"

G-8 said, "Look at what number thirteen on Nippy's Spad has done for him."

"It hasn't done as much for him as it has for me," Bull argued. "Look where I am now. A German agent that doesn't speak good German with a number thirteen tacked onto me."

"Well, as I said," G-8 reminded him, "you can quit now and I'll try to get someone else at Intelligence Headquarters who can fill the bill."

Bull shook his head. "I'll stay with it," he said. "When do I start?"

"As soon as you're ready."

"Let's go."

The Yank general held out his hand. "The best of luck, Martin."

The staff colonel stepped up and held out his hand.

"Good fighting, Martin."

ANOTHER officer of the staff and then another stepped up and shook hands with Bull. Big Bull Martin's legs got a little shaky. This was a little like being sent to the gallows. His big fists clenched and opened slowly, and he felt suddenly anxious to be going.

G-8, Battle and he left together. Outside, G-8 said to Battle, "You go back and tell Nippy what's been going on. Keep track of things until I get back."

It was dark outside. Bull and G-8 climbed into the roadster, and G-8 drove swiftly through the darkened streets of Paris.

Now that they were rolling along, G-8 gave him last-minute instructions.

"I don't know what you'll meet after you lift that round metal door at the base of the statue and start down. From there on, it's up to you. I did get what I hope is the correct password. The only thing is I didn't hear it very clearly. You may have to bluff. Try mumbling it—*'Gefangen'*."

Bull repeated it, then tried the word several times, with variations, until he satisfied G-8.

Afterwards they drove in silence, until Bull asked, "Am I supposed to speak German?"

That worried him most.

"You'll have to use your own judgment," G-8 said. "Don't speak German any more than you feel is absolutely necessary."

Bull pulled the metal claws over his hands and fists. It was like wearing brass knuckles except that instead of a metal ridge across the back of the hands, there were those murderous, three-pronged talons, sharp as razors on the inside. The claws extended only an inch or so beyond the fist, so that in punching, if you brought the fists slightly downward as a blow was struck, the claws would rip an antagonist's flesh.

"Boy," Bull growled, trying to relieve his tension, "I can't wait until I get going among those Heinies with these things. I've always wanted a fist fight with them—only this ought to be better."

"That's something you must not do unless you have to," G-8 said. "Remember, you're one of their agents. You're reporting back after killing General Greer. You can explain your delay by saying you were pursued. Get along with them as long as you can."

"Okay," Bull nodded gloomily. "Just let me forget that thirteen stuff as long as possible."

The car stopped and they got out. G-8 led Bull through the blackness of the night, past the open spaces in the park and then through the thickly-grown, darker area about the old statue of La Bareau.

From where they crouched in the thickness of the shrubbery they could just make out the statue and the round metal door in the base. G-8 pointed to it and whispered:

"There's the statue and there's the door. I examined it when I was here earlier, and it doesn't seem too complicated. I couldn't try it out, of course, but if you slip a finger or two into the hole in the door and lift it, that ought to do. When you've got all the dope you think you can get, report back to Le Bourget. We'll be waiting for you."

"Right," Bull said through tight lips. "And all the luck in the world!"

Bull felt the reassuring slap of the Master Spy's hand on his back as he started across the short open space, heading for that metal door below La Bareau's statue.

CHAPTER NINE

Den of the Death-Dealers

BULL was careful to emerge from the shrubbery where a path cut through it. In this way he would appear to have been hurrying down the path to keep a belated rendezvous with his murderous colleagues.

Now, more than at any other time in his life, Bull felt that he had to make good. The stakes were enormous, but even more than that, he wanted to justify G-8's faith in him.

He felt a chill run up his spine and fairly curl the short hair at the back of his neck as he strode across the small open space beside the monument. This was the last of freedom—it might be the last of him. A few more moments, and he would be one of the beast-men, one of a killer pack engaged in the most ghoulish scheme ever devised. A few more steps—and there would be no turning back. . . .

He didn't hesitate.

Striding across those few yards of grass, he tried to keep his heart from pounding. He seemed to be able to hear it, like a deep drum that must be audible to anyone within a hundred feet. He must relax and be ready to take anything that came with calm and a cool head—

He reached the monument. He paused for a split second beside the iron door, then, bending down, he found a hole large enough for two fingers to probe through. He lifted it, straightening.

The door opened with surprising ease. He stuck one foot down and found the rung of a ladder and then another. He descended into a pocket that was as black as the bottom of a deep well at midnight.

He couldn't see. He only knew that he was going down this ladder, that he must keep going down. He let the iron trap door close above him. His hands felt the rungs of the ladder now. He tried to listen, tried with all his senses to get some warning of what lay below; but there was only darkness—and silence.

The space around him smelled musty, like an underground room that suffered from poor ventilation. He kept going down. He thought he had descended for the space of minutes, and still there was no telling how far down he still had to go.

Suddenly his feet touched a stone floor. He released his hold on the ladder and stepped back.

There was a blinding flash before his eyes. Bull darted back. He had those ghastly claw knuckles in his pocket. G-8 had told him to keep them off while he entered the secret chambers, as the others had done. Now he wished that he had them on—and then he thought of his bare fists; they'd served him well before.

He waited.

This flash stayed on. At first it completely blinded him.

A voice behind the light spoke, deep and rasping.

"So—you are late."

"*Ja*," Bull said. "After I carried out my mission the guards had me cornered in a cellar on the rear street. I waited until they gave up the search. I am sorry."

His own voice, delivering the carefully thought out speech, sounded strange to Bull Martin. He would much rather have

waded in with his great sledge-hammer fists flying; deception wasn't his forte—yet he seemed to pass muster.

"Give the password."

Bull coughed and spoke simultaneously. *"Gefangen—"*

For an instant there was no response from the man behind the light. A second seemed like a month. Then, suddenly, the light went out and the voice in the darkness said:

"Go on. Here." Bull felt a heavy body beside him and then his left arm was seized and his hand placed on the rocky wall beside him. "Follow the wall and turn in at the first door. You remember, of course."

SOMETIMES the stone paving was rough; at other times it was smooth. He heard a slight gurgling sound beside him, off to the right. That might be an underground stream flowing through this passage. Then, he remembered the sewers of Paris—his memory jogged by a mixture of odors.

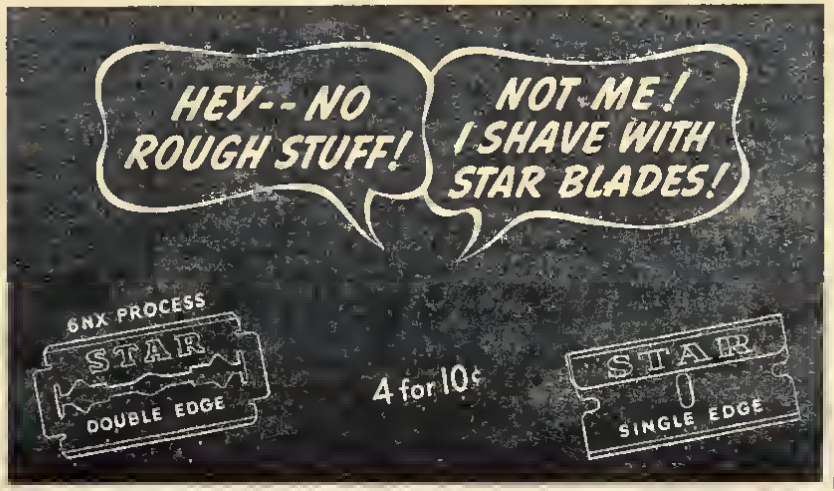
Queer, though, that the sewer should pass directly under that statue of La Bareau in the park. But now that he thought of it, perhaps it had been planned this way when it was built. He was trying to think who La Bareau was. He never had heard of him. It might be that this whole thing had been a secret underground passage for crooked work of some kind, built and engineered along with the other sewers of Paris by some scheming Paris politicians. He'd heard plenty about French politics.

He had walked cautiously for over a hundred yards. The passage had turned and twisted a little in its course. No sign of a door, or of the end of the passage. That was funny—why should he expect an end to the passage? If this was part of the Paris sewers, they all ran pretty much into one another—a network of drainage canals.

Suddenly, as he considered that, his left hand touched a vacant space in the left wall and at the same time, his right hand which he had been holding extended before him, touched a hard wall that blocked him ahead.

He paused here and stood peering around in the blackness that enveloped him. He blinked his eyes closed, held them shut tightly for a long moment and then opened them again. It was as though he were totally blind. He couldn't see a thing—yes, now he could. That space on the left where his hand had touched nothing so suddenly. A tiny streak of light was now spraying across the floor as if through a narrow crack under a door.

Even that infinitesimally small ray of light showed him many things. He could see the passage ending here in a solid



wall of masonry. Beside the path where he had been walking, something like an old tow path beside a canal, ran the trickling stream of drainage water in a lower depression walled with stone.

The ceiling wasn't much higher than his head. The door was heavy, and seemed to be made of wood. He reached out and touched it and his hand came back quickly in a little surprise. The door was cold and clammy like the wall. It wasn't wood at all—the door was a block of stone.

It opened by itself, and the light inside, a dim electric torch held in the hand of a guard larger than Bull Martin, showed him a small room, like an entrance hallway.

The light flashed full in his face as the first had done, but this time it was not so blinding.

"You are late, One Hundred and Thirteen."

Bull opened his mouth to explain as he had done before, but the guard chopped off his words. "The password."

"Gefangen."

The flashlight beam turned and the man led the way to the door ten feet away across the reception room.

That door opened before their advance and they entered a large underground room lighted by candles set in niches around the walls, shoulder high.

Around the walls of the room were bunks, all of them empty. Eighteen men were gathered about a huge table in the center of the room, each of them as large as Bull Martin.

But there was one thing that took all of Bull's attention—the large table was piled full of food. There was a great platter high with chicken sections; another platter held French fried potatoes. And still another platter held vegetables. A great bowl that was going the rounds, was now only half full of well-browned chicken gravy.

Another thing that Bull Martin saw at that table was one vacant space at the bench to the right.

Men called to him from about the table.

"You almost lost out on supper," one said.

"Better eat while there is food left."

That came from perhaps the smallest of the men about the table, an ugly-faced fellow just about Bull's size.

BULL moved over to the vacant place on the bench and began filling the plate before him. He took three sections of chicken, two legs and a breast, mashed two potatoes and smothered them with gravy and dipped deep into the dish of vegetables.

If he didn't feel at home in any other way here, he could hold his own at eating.

The biggest, ugliest brute, at the far end of the table, glared down to where Bull sat.

"I shall expect your report and a detailed explanation of your delay in joining us," he said.

He had a booming voice that echoed throughout the room.

Bull chewed savagely at his mouthful of potatoes and chicken gravy. He nodded and grunted, *"Jawohl."*

He kept silent, eating and listening.

There was plenty of conversation going on about him. The beast-man across the table was explaining to the one beside him.

"This grandfather of mine was a sharp fellow." The brute had a French accent. "He was the biggest rascal in Paris and so it was that he, Charles La Bareau, had the monument erected to himself—at his expense. It gave him the opportunity to have this hiding place built below it."

His neighbor nodded. "Very clever fellow."

The speaker laughed. "Yes, my grandfather knew that some time the law might catch up to him. So he was ready when the time came."

"And did the law ever catch him?"

"They tried," the grandson said. "They tried very hard, but grandfather had stores of food put up down here. And so he came and lost himself here for some weeks and the law forgot him, until one evening he came out and was walking about the park that he had had his crooked politicians build for him with his monument. And someone saw and recognized him walking in the park and reported him."

"Did they catch him?"

"No," the other laughed. "He stepped behind the monument and was gone, locking the iron door on the inside. All the police of Paris combed the whole park

and this portion of the city. But while they were searching the park, my grandfather escaped through the secret way he had left open."

Bull pricked up his ears.

The head brute at the end of the table glowered at the speaker, but the latter went on babbling.

"You see, it was necessary for my grandfather to have a way to bring in air to breathe. So he had a shaft built there at the corner of the room." The speaker pointed. Bull turned, as did the others.

"It is behind that jutting rock in the top of the wall, close to the ceiling," the grandson said. "The shaft is large enough for a large man to crawl through. About a hundred yards from here it leads into the ventilator that serves the old Chamber of Deputies. They say my grandfather could sit here when the Deputies were in session and hear all of their secret conversations. And when they were not in session, he could crawl through the passage and out through the chamber without anyone's knowing."

Bull was still eating when the man at the head of the table got up and nodded to him imperiously.

"I will have your report now," he said. He turned toward another door opening into a smaller room.

"One moment, *bitte*," Bull said and went on eating and listening. But the grandson of La Bareau had finished, and the others didn't talk about anything but the ghastly jobs they had just done. They laughed and roared, telling of the fearful expressions on their victims' faces as they killed. It took the rest of Bull's appetite away and he got up in disgust and went into the smaller room where the leader was waiting for him.

The leader was seated behind a desk. There were several pairs of the claw knuckles on the desk top, at his right. He nodded to Bull, and now Bull noticed that those deep-sunk eyes of the brute leader were following his every move.

"Shut the door," said the leader.

Bull turned and closed the heavy wood door. He had a sudden feeling of being trapped, a prisoner. His heart began pounding again as it had when he had first entered these dark underground chambers.

CHAPTER TEN

Trapped

THE LEADER had not taken his eyes from Bull since the latter had entered the room. He seemed to be staring through him now. It seemed to Bull that he must be able to see through the make-up.

The leader spoke. "As I told you when you left, you were given perhaps the two most important assignments tonight." Bull struggled to follow the big man's German.

Was that "two" he had said? Bull knew of the job of killing General Greer. But he didn't know about the other.

He tried to relax and let things ride as far as he could.

There was no other chair in the room except the one that the leader occupied behind the desk. Bull was standing before him. He hoped he wasn't showing the uncertainty he felt. Frantically, he tried to figure what the other job might be.

"Of course, Herr Goulon considers the killing of Major Bradley as most important, but that is his fanatical mind working. Now, you took time enough to do what you had to do. You should have been successful."

Bull nodded. "*Jawohl.*" And then, in English, "I was successful with one. The other was not there and I could not carry out his execution."

The leader glared at him. "You failed?"

"Hardly that," Bull said. "I shall get him tomorrow night. He will be back by then."

The leader's face was growing purple. "Whom are you talking about?"

Bull tried a bluff. "I killed, of course, the Surgeon General Greer. That was simple. Then the guards drove me into a house on the back street and I had to hide for a long time deep in the cellar



before at last they gave up the search."

The leader was breathing heavily.

"You mean you missed the principal victim you were sent for?"

Bull was stalling desperately for time and information.

He said, "How could I get at him if he was not there?"

"But he must have been there," the leader snarled. "He couldn't help but be there. *Himmelkreuzdonnerwetter!* The General Greer would not have been at the office without the other."

"I am sorry," Bull said, holding his temper in check, "but that is the way it happened. I believe that the great commander had left General Greer in charge of his office for the night."

That was taking a chance—but there was no change in the leader's expression. The other was as angry as before, and no more surprised. That was it, Bull decided. He had been sent to get his commander as well as General Greer. Number One Hundred and Thirteen whom Bull tried to impersonate was to have accomplished both of those jobs.

The leader glared at him more sharply.

"Why do you speak in English instead of German?" he demanded.

Bull's brain was working frantically again.

"I must practice my English," he said. He watched to see what effect that statement had. The leader seemed puzzled.

"If I do not speak English, I might lapse into German while on a mission."

A peculiar expression crossed the leader's face. It was a look of doubt, uncertainty, almost suspicion. Bull couldn't completely fathom it.

"What do you think Herr Goulon will say when we report to him at Grossvalla that you have failed to get the American commander?"

"I'm sorry," Bull said, "but he'll have to wait until I can get at him." And while that name 'Grossvalla' was sinking in, Bull asked further, "Will we be going back there soon?"

THE leader looked at him sharply. "What should worry you is, will you ever be going there again," he snarled, rising. His hand went for his Luger and he stepped out from behind the desk.

Bull stepped back. He had no automatic. He only had those gouging knuckles of his in his pocket but there wasn't time for those—and he didn't want to use them anyway. His bare knuckles were itching for the feel of the other's chin—in spite of his words to G-8 earlier, he was a fighter, not a murderer.

The leader was speaking, spitting out his German words through his clenched teeth. "I am sure now. You are not One Hundred and Thirteen. You do not have his voice. Besides, he spoke perfect English. There was no reason to practice."

He came around the end of the desk, menacing Bull with his Luger. Bull's eyes flashed, as he waited, unmoving.

Then a break came. The leader, in moving close to the edge of the desk, touched a penholder with his elbow and knocked it to the floor. Instinctively, the other's eyes flashed toward the sound—and into Bull's mind came a flashing memory of the field-carrying punts of his football days. The feel, the power, the accuracy were still all there, guiding his toe. . . .

It caught the larger man's wrist with paralyzing force. The Luger flew from the leader's grasp.

Bull made a frantic effort to catch the gun, but it flew to the corner of the room. Bull lunged forward. His left lashed straight out in a jab to the leader's middle. Pain shot up his arm at the contact; the other man, too, was in excellent condition, hard and muscular. Bull brought one up from his knees. . . .

That, too, connected. The eyes of the huge leader glazed, but he was far from knocked out. He staggered forward, flailing great arms and fists. But this was a silent fight now—that first blow hadn't left the German enough wind for a yell. He snatched a handful of the claw-knuckles from the desk top.

Bull ducked and leaped away. He was finished if one of those claws got him. One sweep would tear any man's face off.

Bull bent low and came up with the Luger in his hand. The leader lunged in, jammed Bull into the corner and struck with all his might.

Somehow, Bull managed to slip that punch and the other's fist crashed into the stone wall behind Bull.

Bull Martin struck with the Luger,

aiming at the brute leader's head. He put all his strength into the blow and brought the Luger down hard.

There was a crunching sound that he hoped didn't carry through the closed door into the other room. The big leader reeled and Bull caught him before he fell.

He carried the leader over behind the desk and stretched him out on the floor where he wouldn't be seen through a casually opened door. The big man moved. It might have been a posthumous, convulsive reaction—or maybe the other was still alive. No need to take unnecessary chances.

Bull raised the Luger and struck again. That blow was a definite *coup de grace*—the huge body stretched out and lay still.

Bull got up. He slipped the Luger into his pocket and surveyed the little room.

He picked up the penholder that had tipped over on the floor, straightened the papers on the desk. Everything must be left so that if anyone peered through the door when Bull went out, they wouldn't be suspicious.

Bull couldn't help feeling that he was doomed, even though he had finished off the leader. If the leader had realized that he was not One Hundred and Thirteen, then surely some of the others who had worked with the original murderer would notice differences and become suspicious.

He waited inside the door, listening, trying to think. He could hear voices outside, through the door. He couldn't tell what they were saying. He couldn't hear many words directly; not enough to make sense. The door kept out the sound pretty well from both sides.

For a long time, Bull stood there at the door listening. The voices seemed to grow a little louder, as though the men were calling to each other across the big room—that might mean that the men were in their bunks, most of them at least—and that would solve another problem.

If he could wait until they were all settled . . . his bunk would be empty and he could sneak in.

While he waited, Bull began going through the desk drawers. He found certain papers that he glanced over. There were addresses—perhaps of other units of these murderers. Addresses of houses and headquarters in other towns and cities in France. He noted one thing. In many cases they were near some large, well-known hospitals.

This was something, then, that he had come for. G-8 must have these things. His job now would be to get the information to G-8 as quickly as possible.

He sorted out what papers he wanted to take, slipped them into his pocket and turned for the door. He'd have to make the break sometime. Might as well be now.

Opening the door part-way, Bull said in his deep voice, "*Jawohl*," and stepping out, closed the door behind him.

He turned and looked into the silent, waiting, questioning faces of the men lying in their bunks.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Curtain of Fire

A LONG, tense moment dragged by. Bull had to make up his mind whether to say anything at all and to try and locate the bunk where Number One Hundred and Thirteen was supposed to sleep.

He saw a vacant bunk, started toward it. The tension broke a little as he walked across the room. The brute lying on the bunk next to his grinned a horrible grin and asked, "Did the leader give you a bawling out?"

Bull nodded and leaning low, whispered. He hoped the whisper would take care of any variations in his voice from that of the man he represented.

"Don't remind me of it," he hissed. "I was lucky to get out alive." He winked and cast a furtive glance at the closed door that hid the dead leader.

The man he had spoken to chuckled in a deep, rumbling voice. He seemed satisfied, even happy. Bull felt rather proud of himself. It had been a stroke of sheer genius, he felt, to have intimated the leader was furious—it would postpone discovery of the body.

The men in their bunks began to quiet down. There seemed to be no further cause for worry at the moment.

From where he lay, Bull glanced across the room at the ventilator that the grandson of La Bareau had mentioned at the

table. By climbing up on the top bunk, Bull would be able to reach that secret exit.

Against that chance, he considered trying to leave by the way he had come in. It seemed that none of the men here in their bunks would be leaving. These attacks had been made pretty much *en masse*. . . .

He lay still in his bunk, pretending to be asleep, and listened to the heavy snoring of first one and then another of his bunkmates. He wondered if these two guards with their lights were still on duty. He hadn't seen them come in and join the others since he had first entered the underground chamber.

For a long time he lay still with eyes closed. All of the others were sleeping in their various uniforms, which ranged through British, French and Yank.

It seemed to Bull that at least an hour passed, then one ugly bird raised his head and glanced at the closed door to the leader's inner office. He glanced at Bull after that and then settled back again. Bull lay there, one eye cocked on the fellow for a long time. When he finally saw the brute's chest heaving in heavy slumber, he slipped from his bunk and moved across the room to the other corner.

That rock that jutted out, so La Bareau's grandson had said, hid the entrance to the ventilator and the secret escape.

Bull scarcely paused below the rock. He stepped on the edge of the lower bunk, putting his weight on it gingerly, and then to the upper bunk. There was a slight creak, but now was no time to stop.

He drew himself up on the overhanging shelf rock and there was the opening with a gentle blast of air coming through it. He didn't hesitate—his head and shoulders went through the opening, and then he began crawling through the low tunnel that had seemingly been cut out of solid rock.

Crawling as fast as he could, he had gone perhaps ten yards through the tunnel when a warning voice came to him. The sound came from behind, back there at the entrance to the ventilator tunnel. But it didn't stop him. It only spurred him on to faster motion.

"Halt," the voice bellowed again. "What are you doing crawling away through the secret passage?"

Bull turned and called back, "I am leaving on an urgent mission. I failed to accomplish one half of my mission, and I'm going to finish the job tonight."

He kept crawling. The other's voice came to him again.

"*Ach.*"

He didn't know what that meant.

Bull began moving faster and faster, but he seemed to be traveling at the pace of a turtle. He felt like one, too—a turtle helpless on its back, its main defensive strength gone.

He began to wonder now if this really did lead as the brute had said, to the old Chamber of Deputies room in a building across from the park. And if it did, and he were discovered, what would he say?

Not nearly enough of the tunnel had he put behind him when he heard the tumult of voices at the rear end. Briefly, there was noisy confusion—then a gun barked and the noise echoing in the tunnel made his ears ring.

He heard the bullet ricochet from one wall of the tunnel to another, but there were too many turns behind him. The bullet stopped before it reached him.

AS HE crawled on, he felt for the papers in his pocket. Yes, they were there. He could hear excited bellowing voices behind him.

"*Donnerwetter,* look. The leader has been killed!"

"Stop that one who escaped."

"I thought he did not sound like One Thirteen."

"Stop him!"

"Let me crawl after him. I can crawl fast."

"Let me get my claws on him. I will tear the meat off his bones."

The voices, snarling and confident, spurred Bull on his way.

He was going through contortions he had never tried before. The beast-men were coming after him through the tunnel like a pack of bloodthirsty wolves.

He hadn't crawled a half mile. He felt sure of one thing. Those birds pursuing him hadn't gained on him. They were still pretty well back and if he could only find a way of stopping them—

He came out of the rock tunnel into a metal ventilator almost large enough to stand in, and a thought struck him. The air was still flowing against him, back into the tunnel. Now, feeling about in the darkness, he found hooks in the side of the ventilator by which he could climb up.

But first he must stop his pursuers or at least hinder them. He moved on as fast as he could climb, fairly running up the metal ventilator. If he found what he wanted when he got to the top, he might be okay.

At the top of the climb, the square metal tube he was in leveled, and be had to crawl again. The air still kept blowing in his face. He crept perhaps a hundred feet or more and then brought up against a grill. He seized it with his hands, found that it lifted out quite easily. He emerged in a very large room.

Heavy drapes were drawn back at the windows and the light from dim street lamps filtered in through leaded glass. He grinned as he snatched one and then another of the heavy plush drapes and bunched them loosely just inside the ventilator.

He struck a match and touched off the drapes. They didn't burn easily, but the breeze that carried through the old ventilating system fanned the smoldering mass of plush to smoky flame.

Dense smoke poured from that bundle of burning cloth. The smoke billowed into the ventilator. Bull tore down another heavy drape and piled that on the fire, and for luck he added another.

The smudge was going furiously. Through the ventilator, he could hear choking and coughing and cursing. He grinned.

He whirled now and made for the heavy door. It was locked. Bull tried it with his shoulder, and it was like bucking a stone wall.

He found a switch and turned on the lights. A great chandelier gleamed and glistened from the high ceiling.

The coughing and choking continued to come through the ventilator. A little of the smoke was escaping into the room. Bull kicked the smoldering mass farther



into the tunnel and it fairly roared as the draft fanned it. But the choking and coughing was coming closer.

Bull rushed for the leaded glass windows. They were built solid and except for a very small section at the bottom, they had no movable parts. Bull threw that open and peered down. He was too far up to jump.

Bull spun round and saw the telephone on the great desk in the corner. He might be able to call G-8 from there. It was worth a try to get his information through before his pursuers got to him. He made a leap for the instrument.

He gave the number of Le Bourget field. "This is urgent. Get that number at once and send the police and Intelligence to the old Chamber of Deputies."

"Oui, Monsieur."

And then G-8's voice spoke at the other end.

Bull had the papers ont before him.

"Get all this down, G-8. I've crawled through to the old Chamber of Deputies across from the park. I've got all the dope you want but I'm locked in here and they're coming after me. Write these things down."

"Okay. Good boy. Go ahead."

"Grossvalla seems to be a place where Herr Goulon has his headquarters," Bull said. "I don't know any more than that. Now for the other branches of these Goulon agencies. Here are the addresses."

He read first from one list and then another. Address after address. The sounds of pursuit were coming nearer. Bull couldn't understand how the beastmen could fight their way through that mass of pouring smoke to get through and up and over the ventilator, but they were doing it. Coughing and cursing they were coming to get him and there didn't seem to be anything he could do to stop them.

WAR BONDS ARE WAR WEAPONS—TOP THAT 10%!

He must, above everything else, get his information out.

Reading as fast as he could, he hurried on. There was a sort of explosion at the entrance to the ventilator and Bull saw the first of the beast-men come charging through the burning mass.

It was the grandson of La Bareau. He made a lunge for Bull clear across the room.

But Bull still had the Luger. He shot without pausing in his reading, hardly changing the tone of his voice.

The lunging brute clutched at his heart in a convulsed move and went down, plowing his face into the thick rug. He shuddered and lay still.

Another pursuer was climbing from the ventilator. He took time to kick the smoldering drapes into the room before he started for Bull.

Bull fired again. The fellow reeled and came on. It took another slug to finish him.

More came and Bull kept firing with cold accuracy.

He heard G-8's voice raised in startled query, and snapped back: "Get these last names and addresses."

He went on reading and another beast came crashing from the ventilator and fell dead in his tracks as Bull cut loose with the Luger.

Then Bull gripped the phone tighter. The last time he had pulled the trigger, nothing happened. He barked into the mouthpiece.

"Got to go now. A little business—"

The last brute that he had failed to get, was coming at him. Bull sailed into him, bare fists swinging. He threw a left jab and then stepped in, slipped a right to the jaw and countered with a pretty right hook that spun the beast's head half round on his thick neck.

His first victim was going down, but the others came tearing at Bull. They spread out, surrounding him.

Bull got the first one with a left hook and, whirling, lashed out with his right to the jaw of the other. He missed. Then something leaped behind him and there were stars and flashes and then blackness, blacker even than the underground caverns he had left.

Bull Martin knew nothing more.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Master-Web

WHEN the Master Spy heard the first of the shots over the phone, he barked a command to Nippy and Battle who were still in their beds.

"Get up, both of you. Bull's in trouble."

That was enough for either of them. Before Bull's last words came over the phone, Nippy and Battle were standing beside their chief ready for action.

G-8 himself was in his pajamas. He left the phone and plunged into his room. "Get dressed, Nippy. You're going down with me. You, Battle, call Intelligence. Tell them to get to the old Chamber of Deputies at once. Tell them to go thoroughly armed."

In little more than two minutes, G-8 was dressed. He ran to the living room. Battle was telephoning Intelligence; he finished just as G-8 came to him.

"Here," G-8 said. "Take these names and addresses and telephone them to authorities nearest to each."

"Yes, sir."

G-8 flipped his Colt automatic in his hand, cocked back the barrel slide and put on the safety. She was loaded and ready, except for a swift movement of his thumb and finger to fire it. Safety off and trigger on. That would be all and he could begin to kill.

Nippy was ready, his Colt ready for action. They charged out into the storage end of the hangar together, and G-8 leaped behind the wheel of his roadster. They shot up to the dark highway and headed toward Paris.

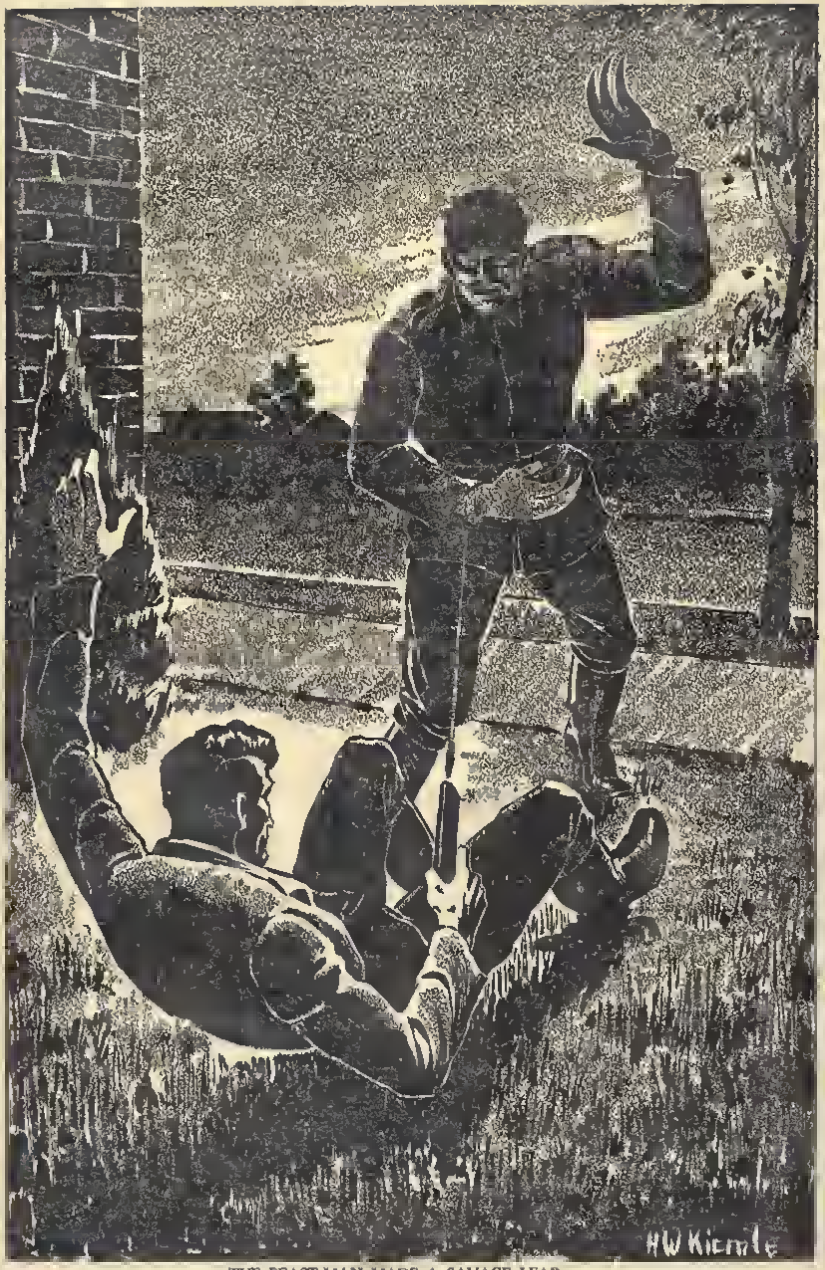
As he drove, G-8 told Nippy what he knew about Bull.

"There's a bird who really did a swell job," G-8 said. "He had a list of every place where Goulon's agents might be. I haven't the slightest idea where or how he got it, but he got it."

"Bull always comes through in the pinches," Nippy said. "If he hasn't tried to lick the whole German army single-handed, he may be okay by now."

They took corners on two wheels, grazed sleepy gendarmes, and went charging on toward that queer little park.

"What I can't figure out is what Bull's



THE BEAST-MAN MADE A SAVAGE LEAP....

doing in the old Chamber of Deputies building," Nippy said.

"He didn't take any time to talk about himself," G-8 said tensely. "We may find out a lot of things that'll surprise us."

"I sure hope we get there in time to find the big guy alive," Nippy said.

Even as he spoke, the roadster was drawing up before the old Chamber of Deputies. Then they were out of the car and running up the wide steps. There were heavy doors on the outside and they were locked. The whole building seemed to be shut off from the rest of Paris, except for the lights shining from two great windows, two stories up and to the left. They were long, high windows of leaded glass and through the many panes of glass, Nippy and G-8 could see the glitter of lights from a crystal chandelier.

THERE was a blasting sound as G-8's Colt exploded the lock; the door thundered and he put his shoulder against it and pushed. The door gave way and they rushed inside.

He found a switch and turned on the light. Stairs, wide and ornamental, led up from the main hall.

They ran up the long flight.

Reaching the main chambers, they paused. This door, too, was locked. This was a solid lock that could not be shot off.

There was a bedlam of voices below and then the pounding of running feet. Turning, G-8 saw men coming up. Some were dressed in civilian clothes and others were in American uniform.

He recognized various agents from Intelligence.

The little man, L-9, seemed to be in charge. He said, "Well, we meet again, G-8. What seems to be the trouble?"

"Let's get this door open," G-8 said caustically, "and we'll see."

One of the other agents produced a ring of keys, and long moments passed while he tested the lock.

G-8, his anxiety for Bull's safety growing with the delay, demanded, "What took you so long? Nippy and I started from Le Bourget after Battle called you and we're here ahead of you."

"It took some time to round up these agents," L-9 snapped.

Nippy cut in wrathfully with, "Maybe we shouldn't have bothered you. You sure brought a gang—sort of too late with too many."

"Never mind," G-8 said.

He was the first to step into the Great Hall after the door was unlocked. He went inside and stopped while the others crowded after him—and stopped to stare.

Ugly-looking brutes lay in a great heap in the far corner of the room. Some of the furniture was tipped over. The place smelled like a smudge pot.

"Burning rags," Nippy said.

Both he and G-8 were walking among the fallen figures, looking at their faces, one by one.

"I don't even know what Bull looked like when Battle was through with him," Nippy said.

G-8 went on searching silently.

There were eight dead brutes lying in that heap near the open ventilator. A ninth lay in the middle of the floor, his face puffed.

G-8 stopped by him and bent down. He came up presently and nodded to Nippy. "Get some water. This bird was knocked out. The others were shot dead, most of them through the heart."

While Nippy was out getting the water, G-8 yanked down one of the curtain cords and tied it loosely about the neck of the unconscious beast-man. He tossed the other end of the cord over a part of the chandelier.

"You can't hang a—" L-9 began in startlement.

G-8 didn't answer.

Nippy came with the water and G-8 tossed it into the beast's face. For a long moment, it seemed that the water was going to have no effect on him. Then the eyelids fluttered and in another moment his eyes opened.

The terrier ace came back to G-8's side. "Any sign of Bull?"

"Bull's not here," G-8 said. "But maybe this buzzard can tell us what happened to him."

The brute's little eyes were wide open and flashing dazedly about the room. He lifted one hand and rubbed his jaw.

"*Ach, Himmel,*" he said. "What a punch—"

The man frowned, stared about him. His lips closed and he shook his head. He

wasn't going to talk. That was quite plain.

G-8 leaned forward a little. "Put your hand to your neck," he said in German.

The fellow went a little white as his hand touched the rope. G-8 nodded to the agents of L-9. "Maybe he'd like to be helped up. He doesn't seem happy where he is."

The German clutched the rope. "I—I'll talk," he choked. "*Jawohl.* I'll talk."

"What happened to the one who was telephoning when you came in?"

The German turned his head slowly, looking about the room. "All dead," he said, seeing the others. "He was a fighter, that man."

"Was a fighter?" G-8 repeated. "Where is he now?"

"I don't know." The man rubbed his jaw again. "I have been unconscious."

"How did you get in here?" G-8 demanded.

The man pointed to the open ventilator with the grill torn away. "There," he said. "That leads to our headquarters."

"Under the monument?"

"Yes."

"Was the password *'Gefangen'?"* G-8 asked.

The man nodded.

"Where are the rest of your men?"

He shook his head. "I was unconscious."

"What do you think they did with our friend?"

The man shrugged. "He might be dead."

"Where?"

He shrugged again and nodded to the ventilator. "Maybe in the underground room."

"How many of you were there?" G-8 asked.

"Over twenty."

"Where are the rest?"

"I don't know. I was unconscious."

G-8 ROSE and nodded to the Intelligence agents. "Take the rope off his neck and see that he's put in a good stout prison."

He jerked his head to Nippy. "We're going through."

They checked their automatics before they bent down to enter the ventilator shaft, making sure they were ready for instant action.

G-8 went in first and began crawling along the metal tube of the ventilator. Nippy followed close behind. There was still that faint odor of cloth burning. Nippy said, "Did you see that pile of burned drapes at the entrance to this passage?"

"Yes," G-8 hissed back. "It looks as if Bull used his head there. That must have held back those birds long enough for him to phone."

Nippy whispered, "Wotta guy!"

They reached the place where the shaft dropped down. Groping their way, they found the rungs in the wall and went down and then crawled through the rest of the metal passage, into the rock-lined tunnel.

They did no talking now. If they were to surprise anyone in the underground



chamber, they must make as little noise as possible.

Ahead, G-8 saw the ray of light illuminating the area of the shaft ahead of them. Nippy saw it too. They were moving with more caution, listening as they went.

They could see into the ceiling of the underground room now. There was no sound, no sign of life there, but they continued to use caution, fearing a trap might await them.

G-8 crawled out on the ledge of rock at the end of the shaft and looked down into the room. Nippy came out beside him. They saw the great table in the center and the bunks about the sides. From the ledge of rock, they could see the two

doors, one at each side of the room.

G-8 swung down to the edge of a bunk and Nippy came beside him. There was no sign of anyone in the room and they moved to one of the doors. G-8 opened it, automatic held cocked.

The leader of the brutes was still lying bebind his desk where Bull had left him. They ran througb the desk drawers, but Bull had taken everything of value. Turoing, they strode across the room to the other door and with guns ready, they flung it open.

They faced another small room with a door on the far side. They passed tbrough, and then along the passage beside the trickling drainage; they came to the iron ladder, climbed to the top and out of the iron door.

They found themselves at the base of the monument and Nippy said, "So this is where you last saw Bull—"

G-8 nodded. "But I've got a hunch it won't be the last I've seen of him."

He led the way across the darkened park, back to the Chamber of Deputies. Tbe Intelligence agents were still there waiting, holding the captured German.

G-8 jerked his head. "Put him where he'll keep."

"He wants to tell you something," L-9 said.

"Yes."

"You might save me from a firing squad if I tell you this," the man said.

"I'm not making any promises," G-8 told him. "What have you got to tell?"

"About your friend," the man said. "They might have taken him to Herr Goulon in Germany so you'll come after him and tbey can trap you."

"Where is Herr Goulon's headquarters?" G-8 asked.

The man shook his head. "I don't know."

"You lying—" Nippy snarled.

"Hold it, Nip," G-8 said. Then to the rather subdued beast-man, "Where do you think Herr Goulon is?"

"I'm telling you all I know on tbe chance that you'll spare my life," the man said. "But I was one of the newest of the agents. I bave never been at Herr Goulon's headquarters. The otbers mentioned a place called *Grosswalla*. Do you know where that is?"

G-8 shook his head. "I haven't the slightest idea, but I'm going to try and find out."

He reached for the phone that Bull had used. "I'll call Battle and see if anything bas turned up."

"Is that all you want with this man?" L-9 asked.

G-8 nodded. "You can take him now."

He gave the operator the number of Le Bourget field. There was no answer. The operator tried again and again.

Finally she came back on the wire. "*Monsieur*, the line is not busy. There is no answer. Are you sure, Monsieur, that there is someone there?"

"There should be someone there," G-8 insisted.

He didn't wait longer, but hung up, and turned to Nippy. "Let's go. Something has happened to Battle."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Battle

EVER since G-8 and Nippy had left, Battle had been sending out G-8's message to various civil and military authorities. His task, difficult to start with, was rendered more so by an influx of calls from the very localities he sought to contact—each of them describing further atrocities perpetrated by the iron-clawed monsters, who seemed to be closing in for the kill. The lines were held up for minutes at a time, while Battle swore and fretted.

He was too busy to notice anything about him. He didn't hear the sound of the outside door opening and closing softly behind him. He did feel a slight draft of air on the back of his neck, but he didn't bother to turn. The work he was doing was of vital importance, and if he could make the rest of the calls, he would save many lives.

Suddenly, he felt a presence behind him. He dropped the receiver on the hook and spun round, trying at the same time to duck.

A brute of a man stood before him, a hideous grin on his face, his fists gleaming with the triple claws. Battle's back was to the wall. The man growled, "Where is G-8? Where is the other, the little one? We have come for all of you."

The claws were ready to gouge. For a moment he was too startled to think. He tried to think, to compose himself. With true British reserve, he got control so that be could say in a steady voice:

"The master is out and will not be back for at least twenty-four hours. Mr. Weston is with him."

"You're lying," the brute snarled and he ripped at him with his right fist. The claws tore the front of Battle's shirt and drew blood.

Battle fell back trying to evade another slashing stroke.

Another beast-man, and another came in the door. They leaped on Battle and held him down, then turned him over and fastened his feet and his hands behind his back.

The lights of the apartment were turned out. Shortly after he was blindfolded and gagged. Blind and unable to utter a sound, scarcely able to breathe, he felt himself carried.

He had no idea where they were taking him, but it took them a long time.

Finally, he was loaded into a car and driven in that for about an hour; then he was lifted into a conveyance that set his nerves tingling with a fierce lust for freedom.

The engine was idling. But the strangest part of it was, that it sounded like a Salmson engine. Perhaps a stolen Salmson. . . .

He heard low conversation, without grasping what was said. He strained to see out from under the blindfold, but the cloth was too wide, too securely tied.

He tried next to guess at the time and how long it had taken him to get where he was and what direction they had taken, but he found himself too hopelessly confused.

He lay still in the compartment of the fuselage where they bad laid him and presently felt the shudder of the Salmson engine in takeoff.

THEY flew for almost an hour and then the engine was cut and they were landing—in Germany, he guessed. Battle could feel the wheels and skid touch the earth and roll to a stop.

He heard German voices, loud, now. The motors died and he was lifted out. There was much confusion and a bellowing voice screamed, "You bring me everyone but the swine that I want."

That brought no argument. Battle felt cold and he couldn't help shivering. He could hear the slosh of his captors' boots in mud and then there was an exclamation and he was going down while men about him cursed and splashed. The water was icy.

There was more cursing and then he was picked up again and carried on. Someone, far off, laughed and roared and bellowed and the men who carried him growled and cursed.

Finally, he was lying face down on a very hard floor and his hands and feet were being untied. The gag was removed and then the blindfold.

For the first time in hours he could take a full breath. His lungs filled and after several breaths, he opened his eyes.

He was jerked to his feet, and saw that two of Goulon's agents had hold of him, their gleaming claws bared for action.

But be saw something else as well. He was being held up before Herr Goulon himself. No one could help but recognize that maniac. The red, bloodshot, sunken eyes. The skin on the face that was stretched like the skin of a mummy. The gaping hole for a mouth; the misshapen, hideous teeth.

"So your *verdammter* chief thinks he has fooled me," Herr Goulon growled. "Let him not laugh too heartily. We shall bave him very shortly. You will write him a message, telling him where he can come to find you. He knows your handwriting, *nicht wahr?*"

Battle didn't speak for a moment. His head was spinning. After his immersion in the muddy ice-cold water, these lacerations in his chest burned like fire, and his body felt stiff.

"I asked you a question, swine," Herr Goulon bellowed. He leaped up and, leaning over his desk, raised the steel prongs of his left hand menacingly.

Battle held his composure.

"You'll have to pardon me," Battle said. "I nearly choked to death with those gags."

"It is too bad for you that yon did not!" Goulon howled.

"In that case, perhaps you do not wish

me to answer any questions," Battle said.

Battle was playing desperately for time. He couldn't see what more time was going to get him—the action was instinctive. While he could balk or delay Goulon's plans, he was that much ahead.

He waited now, silently, watching Goulon force a semblance of calm into his distorted features.

"I assume that G-8 knows your handwriting?" Herr Goulon demanded finally, more quietly than before.

"I believe he would recognize my handwriting," Battle said.

"Good," Herr Goulon nodded. "Come here."

He motioned Battle to his desk.

Battle walked past him, dripping water over the rug that covered the floor of the great room.

"Sit down."

Battle sat down.

"There is ink and paper. Write what I tell you to write."

Battle took up the pen and dipped it into an ink container.

Herr Goulon began speaking.

"I am held a prisoner by Herr Goulon. You can help me to escape by coming after dark to the deserted house at the north edge of the village of Greiner, State of Baden."

Battle wrote the message in his careful hand and then looked up and noticed that through a high, narrow window, daylight was streaming through. The night had ended and this was tomorrow.

As he signed the message for help, he realized suddenly how he could make it a warning. He could use a code that he made up now. B. C. would mean "Be Careful."

He signed the message then: B. C. Battle.

Herr Goulon snatched up the message when he had finished signing it and glared at it.

"What is this trick—these letters before your name?"

"That is my name," Battle said. "I always sign my name like that. My full name is Bernard Cecil Battle."

Herr Goulon looked skeptical for an instant and then he broke out in a mirthless laugh. "What a name. Bernard Cecil."

He handed the note to one of his agents. "See that that is placed where G-8 will receive it as quickly as possible."

Turning back to Battle and the other brute agents, he said, "Now take this Englishman into the dungeon and hang him up to dry. *Macht schnell!*"

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Going Through

BULL MARTIN had not the slightest idea how long he had been unconscious. He became aware of certain things about him slowly, like the jolting motion that gave him those sharp little pains in the head. He was riding—probably in a car. Then he could hear the engine purring softly.

Slowly, his mind moved back to where he had become unconscious. He had emptied his gun. That was it. His bullets were gone and he had been knocking them over with his bare fists—until that final blank moment.

The vehicle he was riding in jolted and his head suddenly felt as though it would split. Perhaps it had.

He thought of moving his hand up to his head to see how badly damaged the head was. He moved a hand and then stopped. Perhaps he was doing all right by just staying the way he was. His hands weren't tied. Perhaps his feet weren't tied either. In that event, he might be able to do something about this when he got more of his strength back. Evidently whoever had him a prisoner had taken for granted that he would be out cold for a long time.

He moved his feet experimentally—and was satisfied. He was curled up on the floor of the rear of a car. He could feel the feet of a man stuck in his side.

There were patches of light and dark flashing over his face. He waited until a dark shadow passed over and then he cracked one eye open. There was one of the brutes, dressed in a Yank uniform, sitting in the rear seat of the car. His eyes weren't on Bull at his feet just now but he might look down at any moment.

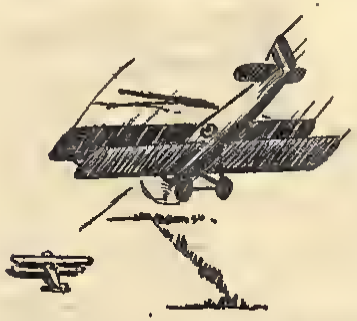
On the German's lap, with his fingers coiled around the butt, was a Colt automatic. Bull got enough glimpse of the gun to see that the beast-man's finger was

on the trigger and the safety was off. No chance of surprising this Heinie—

There would be others in the front seat. The driver and another.

It was daylight and the sky was murky gray. Now and then the car passed under some low-hanging trees. Their added shade was making the difference between shadow and light.

He closed his eyes again. Gradually, his head felt better and he began to try to work things out in his own mind.



BULL decided that he'd stick this out—lie there, as though unconscious, and see what would happen. He wouldn't make any sort of break until he knew the rest of his captors' plans. If that was too late—he would have done his best.

He began to try and figure where they were taking him. He tried opening his eyes again, just a slit. The German was still there on the seat with his toes partly under Bull's side. In this way, the German guard could tell the moment Bull moved of his own free will. He had to be particularly careful. . . .

A thought flashed into his mind. There was a tiny compass on the back of his wrist watch. He moved ever so slightly until he found his wrist watch. It was there all right. He couldn't help a little shocked surprise that the Germans hadn't taken the watch away from him for themselves. That would have been the usual thing.

They went over a series of humps in the rutted road. The German was bouncing in the seat. He turned his head to look down at Bull and Bull closed his eyes and let his body bounce around as limp as a rag doll—and managed to slip the watch around.

When they were on a smoother road, Bull stole a look at the compass. They were heading east.

The German moved, shifting his feet without any concern for Bull's comfort. Bull lay still again and they rolled on. Later he got a chance to glance at the compass again without attracting the attention of his guard. The direction still checked.

He let it go at that and relaxed. His body was getting sore and cramped, and it took all the determination he had to lie still.

The car came to a stop finally. They lifted him out. Two Germans heaved him around like a sack of meal, banging him against the sides of the car door.

Another sound reached Bull. He heard a Liberty engine ticking neatly, like a Liberty would. This, he thought, might be his last chance to put up a fight.

They were carrying him from the car to the D.H. He cracked one eye open enough to see the plane standing in the field ahead, perhaps two hundred feet from where the car had stopped. A slim young chap in a French uniform said in a low voice, in German, "*Macht schnell.* We have not all day. Herr Goulon is waiting."

The men who carried Bull hurried. They lifted Bull's dead weight and heaved him into the D. H. cockpit. One of the beast-men got in with him and settled down in front of him, an automatic held ready.

The Liberty engine roared and the plane trundled along the ground and then rode the humpy air.

After the plane had climbed and was on its way, Bull took a momentary glance at the compass. They were moving west now. That meant one thing. They were heading either for Switzerland or the Vosges Mountains, or the Black Forest.

BULL felt mighty proud of himself now as he lay cramped and sore in the cockpit with the German practically sitting in his lap. For once, he was doing dangerous—he almost dared to think, the clever work—while G-8 himself was left to do the routine cleanup stuff after Bull told him where to go. Those addresses—

he'd got those off his chest, and now he stood a chance of finding Goulon's headquarters.

It was very satisfying. He lay there, trying to keep track of flight-direction and time. . . .

Then they were coming down to land. The engine was cut and the wheels and skid touched and then the plane rolled to a stop. For the first time, he heard conversation.

They were lifting him out of the plane and carrying him. After a few minutes he opened his eyes and could see a patch of trees and a vine-covered castle in the center of a grove. It made him think of the ancient castles he had seen pictures of in the school books when he was younger.

Beyond, he recognized the blackness of the mountains covered by evergreens—the dark spruces of the Black Forest. He guessed that he was just over the boundary, just east of the upper Rhine country.

They carried him on seemingly without fatigue. These were strong men, these brutes of Herr Goulon. His eyes were closed again.

So far as he knew, not one of these Germans knew he was conscious. If he could only fake things out, he might work something that would surprise even G-8. Back at the old government building, he'd managed to use the telephone—maybe there was a wireless here. . . .

Opening his eyes again to slits, he searched for an aerial. They were going through the trees and over a thick carpet of grass. The trees hid part of the castle roof.

Then he saw the aerial. It ran from the south tower to the turret to the north. They neared the south tower now and he tried to find the lead wire, and luck was with him.

He almost moved in his excitement at his discovery. The lead wire came down the side of the south tower, over the vines that covered the tower's curves and led in at a window about one flight up.

As he was carried into the castle, a bellowing voice came to him.

"So, we have another one. *Das ist gut!* Bring him in—"

Another one. The words echoed in Bull's thoughts. Who was here already? Did this bellowing maniac mean that they already had another one of the Battle Aces—or even G-8 himself?

"Herr Goulon, this one has been unconscious since he was knocked out in Paris."

"Unconscious?" Herr Goulon roared. "There are ways to wake up swine."

The men who were carrying Bull Martin paused. Bull Martin waited, without daring to open his eyes.

A terrific blow across the face made his senses swim.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

One-Way Message

NEVER in his entire life had Bull Martin been forced to keep such tight hold of himself. He wanted to tear out of the hands of these two brutes and break the neck of Herr Goulon—but he knew that, afterwards, he wouldn't stand a chance.

These men of Herr Goulon were strong. They were in many cases, perhaps stronger and more terrible than Bull himself. He might, or might not, get Goulon—but that would mean an end to his hopes of contacting G-8 with more information.

His head reeled now, and after he got over that first insane burst of rage, it wasn't difficult to lie doggo.

He heard Herr Goulon saying, "He does seem unconscious. Perhaps he's fortunate enough to be dead."

They carried him into another room. He heard a door opening and closing. Herr Goulon's voice rasped, "Put him here on this cot."

"Jawohl!"

Bull felt the soft padding of a couch under him, and then heard Herr Goulon's voice again.

"Where is the *verdammter Doktor?"*

"I think he is at his office in the village."

"Then go to Greiner and get him! There is no use doing more until we know whether he can be brought back to consciousness."

"Jawohl!"

One of the men was hurrying away.

Bull tried to make a mental note of all that. The castle was apparently near a village called Greiner. That would serve


BULL

to direct G-8 to the right spot. . . .

He lay there for several minutes. Out in the corridor he could hear Herr Goulon's heavy tread and he could hear the crippled brute exploding now and then into fits of cursing. Finally Goulon's footsteps grew lighter, receded.

Bull opened his eyes.

One of Goulon's agents was still in the room. He hadn't counted on that. The brute stood, like a stone statue, feet firmly planted on the floor, his back to Bull.

If he would stay that way, there might be a chance.

Bull moved more on the cot and it didn't make a sound. He sat up, tensed. This must be his supreme effort. No room for failure here. This was it.

He slid, crouching, off the cot. His hand closed over an iron door-stop a pace away from the couch. He took another step—and another—toward the back of the German guard.

His hand raised, Bull leaned forward, balancing on his toes. The guard suddenly jerked round and Bull leaped. He struck with all his might. . . .

BULL caught the body and dragged it to the cot. A door down the corridor outside thundered shut. The babbling, cursing voice of Herr Goulon died away.

Bull laid the brute on the cot, stepped boldly into the corridor. He had the door-stop still in his hand. It made a handy weapon, even if it wouldn't be a match for the hooked claws of Goulon's henchmen.

The corridor ended in a great reception hall. Two of Goulon's guards were striding across the hall. He paid no attention to them. The door-stop was well hidden in Bull Martin's big hand. So far as he knew, his face was still made up to resemble Number One Hundred and Thirteen.

The two Germans walked across the great hall and into the corridor from which Bull had just emerged. They were gone before Bull reached the door into the south tower.

He opened the door and stepped inside. The instant before he closed the door he heard the screaming rasp of Herr Goulon.

"Himmelkreuzdonnerwetter! Where is that guard?"

Bull closed the door and then locked it from the inside. But through the door, heavy as it was, he continued to hear the screaming.

"Where is the prisoner? This dead man on the couch is the guard. Find the swine who was my prisoner."

The walls of the castle seemed to shudder at the screaming, terrible voice. Bull made sure the door was locked and ran up the stairs that wound about the side of the south tower.

He reached a hallway platform and paused before a door. He tried it. It was locked.

A voice inside called, "Who is it?"

"A message from Herr Goulon," Bull said in the best German he could manage.

The door was unlocked and swung open. The wireless operator looked at him inquiringly, listening to the distant racket coming from the other portion of the castle.

Bull didn't waste words. He swung the weight with all his might.

There was a crash as the weight struck the side of the wireless operator's jaw.

He dragged the operator inside, closed the door and bolted it. Then he rushed for the wireless set, switched it over to sending and began calling LeBourget.

A thunderous pounding came to him from below. He kept working the key. After minutes that seemed so many lifetimes, he raised the field. . . .

There was the thunder of feet running up the stairs. It wouldn't take them long to break down the door of the wireless room. It wasn't as heavy as the door downstairs.

Working furiously, he was repeating when, with a rending crash, the door of the wireless room burst inward.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Grossvalla

BACK in Paris, G-8 and Nippy lost no time in getting to the roadster after finding that Battle did not answer the phone at Le Bourget.

Again G-8 was behind the wheel. There was a tense expression on his face. He leaned forward over the wheel and

pushed the foot accelerator to the floor.

Nippy asked, "What do you suppose has happened to him?"

"What happened to Bull?" G-8 asked. "You tell me that, and I'll answer your question."

"Do you think Herr Goulon has them?"

"I don't think they're being presented at Court in London."

The car went racing on at top speed through the streets of Paris. The city was pretty well deserted at this early morning hour. There were some vegetable and fruit vendors on the streets, heading for the market—small farmers who had come in the middle of night from their little farms surrounding the great French capital. They came in all sorts of vehicles. Dog carts and single horse-drawn wagons and here and there a snorting little old farm truck.

G-8 sent the roadster careening around these vehicles and went charging out into the suburbs of Paris and on toward Le Bourget.

He pulled up short at the gate.

Nippy said, "Look. There isn't a light in the place."

A guard came forward, and G-8 asked a question.

The guard shook his head. "No, sir. There hasn't been anyone around."

"When did you come on duty?" G-8 asked.

"About three hours ago."

"And you saw nothing around the end hangar?"

"I haven't seen anything stirring anywhere about the field except a couple of authorized planes taking off down the field. The commander phoned that they would be leaving tonight."

"Two planes?"

"Yes, sir."

G-8 drove on into the storage end of the hangar and got out. He and Nippy hurried into the apartment and switched on the light.

"No sign of a fight here," Nippy said.

G-8 nodded. "They must have taken Battle without a struggle."

"How do you know they took Battle," Nippy ventured. "Maybe he finished his calling and went out."

"Battle wouldn't do that."

G-8 began making a hasty inspection of the various rooms. Battle was nowhere. He came back and met Nippy in the living room.

"Battle's gone," G-8 said, "and what is almost worse, we've lost that list Bull got us."

"Jumping Jupiter! You mean after Bull may have got himself killed getting that information—now it's gone?"

G-8 nodded. He sat down by the library table, drumming his fingers restlessly. Then he seized a pencil and began writing. He wrote a single word, *"Grossvalla."* He stopped and thought and then he wrote something else and, getting up went to the phone. Soon he was talking to someone at the other end.

"Oui, Monsieur," the voice at the other end said. "We were called by your man. We went to the address but found that the agents have already left. I am sorry we were late, *Monsieur."*

"Thanks," G-8 hung up.

He turned to Nippy. "That number is the only one I can remember from that list of Bull's," he said.

"What about this *'Grossvalla'?"*

"That's the name of the place where Bull said Herr Goulon is supposed to have his headquarters."

"What's it mean?" Nippy asked. "I know that 'gross' means 'great' but what about Valla? Something to do with Valhalla?"

"That's what I'm wondering," G-8 said. "Think it over. There's a set of books over there. It might be in that."





BULL SHOT WITHOUT PAUSING IN HIS READING.



He pointed to the bookshelf and lifted the receiver from the hook again. He called the French commander of Le Bourget Field and asked about those two planes that had taken off in the dark. The commander reported satisfactorily on those. They were a couple of pursuits from other fields. Two French commanders from tow other pursuit fields had flown over for a visit. They had stayed late. That was all.

G-8 made another tour of the apartment.

Nippy yawned presently, and G-8 nodded.

"There doesn't seem to be much we can do about this now," he said. "Let's get a little sleep and we'll do better when we wake up."

Nippy nodded. "I sure can do with some sleep if I can get any."

"You aren't apt to do Bull and Battle any good by keeping awake."

THEY turned in, but as dawn broke in the east, G-8 was up again. Out of that short sleep had come an idea. The name *Grossvalla* still bothered him. He felt it should carry some meaning—like a story long forgotten.

He tried to think where he had heard it. While he shaved and washed, he struggled with the ideas, without being able to grasp the right one. There must be something historical about it—like Heidelberg—and the Blarney Stone—

Finally, he went to the phone and put in a call. To the operator he said, "I'd like to have you get me the head professor of the history department of the University of Paris."

The call came through. The professor sounded sleepy. "*Der Grossvalla?* Yes, there is something about it in European history. Let me see if I can recall it, *Monsieur.*" After a while he said, "The legend tells of *Der Grossvalla* as a great series of chambers in the bowels of the earth where the devils pause for rest on their way from Hades. I doubt if there is anything here to help you. It is for the most part a childish fairy tale."

"But the main story of what and where *Der Grossvalla* is—or was," G-8 insisted. "There must be something more definite than that."

"To be sure, *Monsieur,*" the professor said, "these legends are German, therefore, we assume that if there ever was such a place, it must be in Germany. But there is not the slightest indication of where it might be."

"I have information," G-8 went on, "that the modern *Grossvalla* is the headquarters of a man we're desperately anxious to find—a monster. . . ." He went on to explain in some detail.

"One minute, please, *Monsieur,*" the professor said, and then when he came back, "I find nothing more than what I have already told you. *Der Grossvalla* was supposed to be a resting place for the devils who came to torment the people on the surface of the earth. It was the belief then that the fiery Hades was in the middle of the earth. *Der Grossvalla* was the great chambers between the middle of the earth and the surface where the devils stopped on their way to rest."

"Then they might be a great series of caves," G-8 suggested.

"That is possible, *Monsieur,*" the professor admitted. "That is very possible, to be sure."

"Do you know of any such series of caverns?"

"There are plenty of caverns about Europe," the professor said. "But I know of none known by that name or that seem to relate to this legend. I wish I could be of greater assistance to you, *Monsieur.*"

"This has been a help," G-8 said. "Thanks very much, Professor."

He hung up the receiver and turned. His expression was as baffled now as it had been before he had made the call.

"*Der Grossvalla* might be a series of caves," G-8 said. "That's all we can make out of it."

"A series of caves where?" Nippy asked.

"That's what I'd give a lot to know."

THEY ate breakfast in silence. Both G-8 and Nippy were trying to reason out the problems before them. Nothing worthwhile occurred to either.

After they had finished, G-8 was just about to begin working on the geological department of the Paris University when Nippy came to life with an idea.

"I was just thinking from another an-

gle, chief," he said. "The chances are that if Bull and Battle were taken to Germany they were flown in. That means that they had planes of their own over here and if so they would have been heard taking off back of our lines and would have been reported."

G-8 was already on the phone, calling Intelligence.

"And if they didn't have planes of their own here," G-8 said, "then they might have stolen some planes from us. In that case— Hello. This is G-8. I'm calling to learn if there were any enemy planes heard leaving our side of the lines during the night."

The agent at the other end left the phone to make a check. He was back presently. "Sorry, G-8, but there was nothing reported."

"Then, were any planes reported stolen from any of our squadrons. Say, two-seaters—"

The answer came back almost instantly. "Yes, G-8. Two were stolen. A Salmson from Toron and a D.H. from Blenier."

"Good. Any trace of either of them?"

"Not yet. Shall we call you if we get any trace?"

"Please do that," G-8 said.

He turned to Nippy. "There's one answer," he said. "We're beginning to narrow this down."

"Two planes stolen, eh?"

"Yes. From Toron and Blenier, and they're both over near the western end of the front, near the Swiss and German border."

"Right," Nippy said. "Over near the Black Forest."

G-8 was studying a map. For a long time he was silent and then he shook his head. "There are some things about this that I can't understand.

"Like what?"

"Herr Goulon must have a mass of underground agents that use these triple claws for gouging their victims. They've been spread out all over this section of the country, wherever the hospitals are the thickest. There were about two dozen in the chamber under the monument and less than half of those were accounted for.

"Where have they gone? Intelligence, the Military police and the civil police have been combing northern France for them and so far we've captured only one."

"And the only reason we got him," Nippy put in, "was that Bull had knocked him cold."

"Okay. Where have they gone? They didn't leave this side in those stolen two-seaters. And they didn't all march across the front lines into Germany without anyone knowing about it."

The jangle of the telephone bell was suddenly loud and G-8 reached for it instantly. He talked fast, but without excitement.

"Heading this way? Should be here in two minutes . . . Thanks. We'll take care of him. Thanks a lot."

He slammed up the receiver and punched the button on the wall near the phone—a signal to the mechanics to get planes on the line. He started for the door grabbing his helmet and goggles as he went.

"Come on, Nip," he said. That was unnecessary for Nippy was at his heels, helmet and goggles on his head. "A lone Fokker flying full out, heading directly for us here. We'll intercept him."

"Think he's coming to bomb us?"

"Never can tell."

The tarmac was suddenly as busy as a beehive. Mechanics rolled out the two Spads and were turning the props when G-8 and Nippy climbed into their jobs.

With a roar one engine caught and then almost instantly the other began to run. Not much time to warm them up. They taxied down to the end of the apron, turned and opened wide. Both came roaring down the tarmac together and took the air at almost the same instant.

They banked together and turned toward the front, climbing as they flew.

The lone Fokker came screaming out of the northeast, heading straight for them. Hissos wide open, Nippy and G-8 rose to meet him. He had the advantage of position; they had the numbers.

They spread out as he came at them. Nippy swerved to the left and G-8 to the right. The Fokker opened fire.

With a savage upward lunge, the Spads made their attack. Their Vickers guns chattered.

The Fokker suddenly swerved and dived straight for G-8. It was coming

with terriffic speed. G-8 lashed his stick and kicked rudder and the plunging Fokker missed him by scant inches, plunging down.

Just before he crashed, the German pilot seemed to rally and pull out a little. He crashed along the middle of the field, scattering his plane over the landseape.

Nippy and G-8 landed, and a sergeant mechanic came running over with a message streamer.

G-8 unfolded the paper that was in the streamer's pocket. He scanned it quickly with Nippy looking on. Together, they read:

> I am held a prisoner of Herr Goulon. You can help me to escape by coming after dark to the deserted house at the north edge of the village of Greiner, in Baden.

"Look," Nippy exploded. "It's signed, B. C. Battle."

G-8 nodded. "Those aren't Battle's initials."

"Then why did he sign them like that?" Nippy demanded.

"AND you call Bull a dumb ox," G-8 said. "Battle's trying to warn us. He must have been forced to write this—it's a trap. And with those two initials, Battle's trying to spring that trap before we could walk into it."

"But what do they mean?" Nippy demanded.

"I can only guess, but one guess is enough, I think," G-8 said, "B. C. could stand for Be Careful, couldn't it?"

"Jumping Jupiter, you've got it," Nippy exploded. "That's it. And now we know where to go."

"Not necessarily," G-8 said. "We know where we can go to walk into a trap. But the probability is that this village of Greiner isn't far from the headquarters of Herr Goulon."

"Then let's go," Nippy said. "What we waiting for?"

"I think Herr Goulon was right in his advice at that," G-8 said. "The note advises me to come after dark. I think that's a swell idea, myself."

G-8 opened some large maps of the area and began searching for the village. He found it, a tiny speck at the edge of the Black Forest, not far from where Allied lines touched the Swiss border.

G-8 made some measurements. He paused to light a cigarette and went on with his studying. Suddenly, Nippy Weston exclaimed, "Hey—the wireless!"

It had come ever so faintly—so lightly that it had scarcely disturbed the signal G-8 had devised to let them know when their wireless code call was coming in.

Both dropped what they were doing and leaped for the set. G-8 got there first and clamped on the ear phones. He worked the key for an instant, saying just two words. "It's Bull!"

"Good old Bull," Nippy breathed in relief.

G-8 was taking down a message, his pencil fairly flying across the paper. He paused, tense and breathless and then began writing again.

Suddenly he stopped and sat frozen to his chair.

Nippy hissed, "What is it?"

G-8 shook his head. For a long time he sat like that, listening for the message to begin again. But nothing happened.

At length he turned off the set, removed the ear phones and got up. Tapping the paper with the message, he said, "We've got it all down here. I'd give a lot to know what happened to Bull in the middle of his repeat. This may really be the last we've heard from him."

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Condemned

WHEN Bull heard the door to the wireless room crashing inward, he ducked back from the wireless set and stopped his sending. He had a brief, frantic hope that G-8 had caught the rapidly sent message— Then he had plenty to worry about on his own.

A shot rang out and he felt the bullet rip through the uniform nnder his arm, and threw up both hands. Surrender was the only thing left for him and he did that as completely and quickly as he could. He knew that only his quick movement as the door had crashed in had saved him.

His greatest concern was Herr Goulon. There never was any telling what he might do.

Other hard-faced, powerful agents came



charging in. There were a half-dozen, maybe more. Bull didn't take time to count. They choked the door and the little hallway outside with the bulk of their huge bodies.

Bull stood with hands raised, not making a move until the German with the Luger drawn came around behind him and ordered him to march out. Down the stairs they marched him, with Bull in the center of the procession, as if they were going to a beheading party. Bull was thinking at the moment, that if he got off that easily he would be pretty fortunate.

They reached the bottom of the winding stairs. No one had spoken. After that one automatic bark there had been scarcely a sound made except the shuffling and stamping of feet as they milled about.

Now a bellowing roar came as they stepped into the reception hall and strode across the floor. Herr Goulon, limping, was hurrying to meet them. His left arm, the one with the three-pronged hook at the end, was swinging back and forth as he came rushing along.

"You swine!" he screamed. "Where were you? What was he doing?"

The German with the Luger rasped, "He was in the wireless room sending a message."

"A message?" Herr Goulon barked. "Who were you sending a message to?"

Bull stood with hands a little lower. He asked, "Can I put my arms down now? I have been searched—or perhaps you are afraid of me with only bare hands."

"Silence!" Herr Goulon shrilled.

Bull waited and then Herr Goulon, seeming to realize that he was getting nowhere, nodded. "Put down your front feet, pig."

Bull's face reddened. He would feel the blood rushing into his cheeks; they grew burning hot. He lowered his arms.

"I ask you a question," Herr Goulon barked.

"Who was I sending a message to? I was conferring with my chief. You may remember G-8, Herr Goulon."

"What did you tell him?"

"All I knew."

"Is he coming here?" Herr Goulon demanded. He actually seemed suddenly pleased with the idea. It seemed strange to Bull.

"I wouldn't be surprised, if I were you," Bull said.

"I shall not be," Goulon almost purred. He came a little nearer, stopped. "I could not have planned it better. . . ."

Bull stood frozen in sudden understanding. Herr Goulon caught the look in his eyes and stopped. There were more than a half-dozen of Goulon's men standing on either side of them, most of them with drawn Lugers. One false move by Bull and he'd be punctured in a number of vital spots—he controlled himself with difficulty.

FINALLY Goulon spoke. "The fool is a greater fool than I gave him credit for. He deserves to see his master in my hands. Take him below to the dungeon with the other one."

He strode out of the hall.

At least four Lugers were jabbed in Bull's ribs. Hands gripped his arms and whirling him about, headed him for a stairs that led down into the belly of the great tree-covered castle.

They went down one flight and then another. The stones of the second stairs were damp and some of them were slippery with ancient moss. Along a narrow corridor they marched, past a door that was partly open and from which came strange odors of chemicals.

Bull tried to peer in as they marched him past. One of the Germans slapped his face. That was another moment when it was difficult to hold control of himself—but Bull Martin was learning.

Before a door made of iron bars almost two inches thick, they paused and one of the Germans unlocked the door. The door swung open and Bull was shoved inside, his arms still held by the powerful men

at either side of him. They tied his hands and feet—

He saw Battle, lying against the far wall of the dungeon, also securely trussed. The door clanged shut.

Herr Goulon's men left then and Bull could hear them striding down the corridor. He listened with particular care to make sure that none of them lingered in the corridor just outside the door.

Battle was first to speak. He whispered in a surprisingly normal voice, "Mister Bull. You all right, sir?"

"Not too bad," Bull grunted.

"Perhaps I can relieve you a bit," Battle said.

To Bull's amazement, Battle eased up from his cramped position, his heavy bonds dropping away.

"Holy Herring," Bull gasped, "You're practically a magician. How did you do it?"

"It's a rather long story, sir. Something I picked up years ago. I'll let off a bit of the pressure on yon sir, for now. But we must be ready—someone comes every few moments to check."

"Down here?"

"Yes, sir."

Bull felt his bonds tighten briefly, then give. He grunted.

"That better, sir?"

"I'll say. How did they get you, Battle?"

"They just came and took me, while I was telephoning, sir. Caught me by surprise. Do you know where we are?"

Bull told him as nearly as he could. "I got in the wireless room and sent a message to G-8 telling him," he said.

"Excellent," Battle hissed. "I had to write him a note. Managed to slip in a warning. At least he will know where to come for Herr Goulon. He is too smart to be trapped."

Bull began to feel a little better.

"IF I may say so sir, I've been thinking a bit. It would be top-hole if we could take over and settle this matter ourselves, you know."

Bull nodded and in spite of his uncomfortable position, he grinned.

"I'd sure like to try it," he admitted. "If you break me out of these wrappings we'll have a crack at it."

Battle suddenly froze. Then, suddenly, he leaped to his feet.

"Someone is coming. I think it is Herr Goulon."

Like a monkey, Battle began scrambling to the far side of the cell. Bull hissed a question.

"Hey, shouldn't I be tied up more—for the looks."

"Righto, sir. I nearly forgot, sir. Perhaps—better."

Battle came back, twisted the bonds and Bull was twisted grotesquely, his arms drawn tightly behind him.

"Hey," he groaned. "You trying to get even with me for all the cracks I've made about you?"

"Oh, no sir," Battle panted, "But—sorry sir, but there's no more time."

The heavy boots were coming closer. Battle whispered again, "One of them is Herr Goulon."

Bull could twist his neck around and see Battle scrambling back into his bonds. He just managed it in time.

Feet paused outside the grated door. Bull heard the voice of Herr Goulon, saying, "You see, Excellency, I have two of the four. Within another twenty-four hours, I promise yon, I will have the other two. Then—" he broke off to give a rasping cackle of a laugh— "we will try the gas on them. You saw already how it works on rats. We shall try it then on these four rats in this cage, *nicht wahr*?"

"An excellent idea," another voice said. "Let us hope you succeed in catching them."

"But I cannot miss," Herr Goulon said. "I have already, two traps set for G-8. The other one—he will be easy."

They turned, walking back down the corridor the way they had come. Bull and Battle could both hear what they said.

Herr Goulon was speaking in a loud, boastful voice.

"With the gas, we shall be able to accomplish much more behind the enemy's lines—"

"How many agents have you for this?"

"My agents number over a thousand. They come and go freely between here and the Allied side of the lines through *Der Grossvalla*. Tonight, at midnight, I meet with them, in the central chamber of *Der Grossvalla*. The instructions and the gas

will be distributed. Tonight after midnight, I send them to every hospitalization center in the northern half of France. The terror will be complete."

Their voices died away. Bull Martin rasped, "Battle. Get me loose. Let's go. We've got to settle this thing ourselves. G-8 may get here too late."

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Traps for Two

G-8'S FACE was grave as he studied the maps that showed them the country about Greiner and that portion of the Black Forest. He pointed to the mark of a castle. It was marked "Hidden" on the map. That meant that either trees or camouflage concealed the old castle from view from the air.

"If it wasn't for Battle and Bull maybe still being alive in that castle," Nippy ventured, "we could go over with a flock of bombers and blow it off the map."

G-8 didn't answer right away. Nippy, knowing his chief well, stepped to the little phonograph and waited until he could catch G-8's eye. When he did, he nodded questioningly and the Master Spy nodded back. Without further questioning Nippy put on G-8's favorite jazz record. In another moment the raggy tones of "Raggin' the Scale" came romping from the machine.

Nippy played the record over and over again while G-8 paced the room.

It was well past noon when G-8 stopped suddenly, and smiled.

"I think we've got it, Nip. Get out the make-up kit. We'll have to do the best we can without Battle."

"What's the dope?"

"We know from Battle's message that there is at least one trap set for us at the vacant house on the north outskirts of Greiner. Bull was cut off halfway through the second sending of his message. That means they hadn't planned on his contacting us—but having found out that he did, they'll be doubly careful."

"That makes two traps," Nippy said.

"Right. We won't wait until tonight to go over. We'll go over as soon as we can get started. I'll be a German general and you will be my adjutant."

"Me a German adjutant? You know my German—"

"What German adjutant has to do more than say *'Jawohl'?* If an adjutant is a yes man anywhere, it's in the German army. I've got our identification papers—beyond that we'll trust to luck."

He was at the phone now, calling another hangar far down the length of Le Bourget Field.

"Have you got a two-seater Rumpler or Hanoveraner?"

"We have a Rumpler in excellent flying condition, Monsieur G-8, if you would like to see it—"

"I'll take your word for it," G-8 said. "But I want it tricked up a little. My own mechanics will do that."

"*Oui, Monsieur.* I will send it right down."

Nippy had the big make-up kit out and he went into the wardrobe and got out two uniforms, one for himself and one, a general's uniform, for G-8. The Master Spy glanced at them, nodded his approval and went out to give orders to the mechanics.

To the mechanic sergeant he said, "When that Rumpler I have ordered gets here, I want a leak from the oil pipe run into the exhaust. Put a valve on it, so that when I get ready I can turn it on and let the oil drip into the exhaust stack."

The sergeant grinned. "Sir, that's pretty smart," he said. "Going to give the idea you're on fire, sir?"

"That's it exactly," G-8 said. "Drill some holes along the top and bottom of the exhaust pipe, but so that the hot exhaust flames won't come out on the fabric. That will string the smoke out."

"Yes, sir!" The sergeant saluted.

BACK in the apartment, G-8 and Nippy began making up. Nippy came out a severe, arrogant young German *Hauptmann* and G-8 a serious-faced, studious German general with a touch of gray at the temples.

They put on the uniforms and, having finished their dressing, surveyed themselves in the long mirror.

"Perfect," G-8 said.

Nippy bowed with a snap from the waist. "*Jawohl. Danke schon,* your Excellency."

G-8 started for the door, and Nippy followed him. They went to the Rumpler. G-8 got into the front cockpit and Nippy into the rear. There was a brief check for controls and then the Master Spy gave her the gun and they roared into the air and headed toward the front.

G-8 climbed for all the altitude he could get before he got near the front. He feared most of all a brace of Allied planes dropping on them from some cloud.

There were puffy clouds higher and they climbed for them. But the Rumpler didn't have much soup and she wavered and wobbled as she climbed, and finally she reached her ceiling.

It was cold up there and G-8 turned to look about and told Nippy, "Keep an eye out for Allied planes."

Those words had just left the lips of the Master Spy when he saw the flight of three Nieuports diving on them from above.

They were still a good mile or more away. They were coming out of the sun, diving from a higher altitude than the old lumbering German two-seater could climb.

They heard the chatter of machine-gun fire from far off and G-8 and Nippy both knew that these Nieuport pilots were green. That was a break. But they were gaining rapidly.

In desperation, G-8 stuck the nose of the Rumpler down into a gentle dive and hit the throttle for more speed. They headed for a large cloud ahead, a mile or more over the German lines.

The Nieuports were gaining. It was going to be close. G-8 yelled to Nippy, "Pretend to be firing that tail gun. Try to bluff them." But turning, he saw that Nippy was already doing just that.

The cloud came closer and in another moment, just as long-range tracers were slashing at them, they plunged into the fleecy mist of the cloud.

When they came out a hail of Lewis machine-gun slugs met them. G-8 ducked back into the cloud and went droning on blindly.

The cloud was a long one but it wouldn't be long enough. They'd be out of the other end all too soon.

Now they shot out again. But they shot out of the bottom of the cloud and Nieuports were nowhere in sight. G-8 scanned the sky frantically—and Nippy yelled a warning.

"Up there, behind us and in the sun again! Run for it!"

G-8 was running for it. He hit the throttle again and they went screaming in a steeper glide for another cloud.

The Nieuports came screaming down on them like hornets. Maybe these Allied pilots were new and over-anxious, but there was nothing wrong with their nerve and aim.

A stream of tracers slashed through the right wing and another burst pounded on the fuselage, not too far back of Nippy.

G-8 yelled back to the terrier ace. "Give them a burst. Don't hit them. Just scare them."

"For five cents, I'd wave my undershirt," Nippy yelled back and then there was a short burst from his gun—and silence.

"My gun is jammed," Nippy yelled.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Death-Flight

FRANTICALLY, G-8 kicked rudder and lashed the stick about to maneuver the Rumpler out of the line of fire of the Nieuports; but the Allied planes had got a taste of blood and now they were coming in for the kill.

The main trouble with the two-seater German crate was that it was entirely too slow. And even if they had been fighting to kill, that lone machine gun on the tail of the Rumpler wouldn't have done much good.

G-8 tried desperately for another cloud straight ahead. That was the only one in the sky before them and it wasn't much bigger than a pillow.

No help there. If he could get down and begin bedgehopping, he might wear those Nieuports down. Flying directly behind, they'd have a hard time hitting the Rumpler.

G-8 had an idea that he'd have to take the Rumpler down all the way. The earth below them was dotted with Germans, and as he came down, he saw them waving and cheering the Rumpler, thinking it was flown by one of their own pilots.

He was diving lower and lower. A burst of slugs slammed through the instruments before him and carried the altimeter away. Well, he could do without that now.

Above a half-plowed field, G-8 pulled up and went skimming over the trees at the other end of it. The Nieuports still followed. Zigzagging, G-8 sent the two-seater rumbling along with the landing gear sometimes almost clipping the top branches out of the trees.

Suddenly, there was a clunking sound in the engine ahead. The nearest Nieuport had gained in speed, had climbed and now was diving down at the Rumpler. That was bad. He hadn't expected it to do that. It was a clever move on the part of the Allied pilot.

Another stream—and another—came chattering down from that diving Nieuport. G-8 saw the slugs cut into the cowling around the Rumpler engine. The engine gave a mighty snort and backfired, and then the prop stopped.

G-8 managed to wobble over a row of trees and then he dropped down into a field. Another burst came from the Nieuport just as he started in for the landing and that bunch of slugs really did damage. Smoke belched from the engine cockpit and a tongue of flame whipped back at G-8.

"We're on fire," Nippy yelled. "Let's get out of here."

G-8 kicked her over into a slip and came in that way, blowing the smoke and the flame away from the cockpits. They came slashing into the field and he let her skid sidewise until he felt the wind going out of her, then, while he still had control, he straightened out—and just barely in time.

The Rumpler settled on wheels and skid. The flames and the smoke poured back over the cockpits, thick enough to smother both G-8 and Nippy. G-8 leaped over the side, held to the longeron of the fuselage for a moment and then, making sure that Nippy was out ahead of him, dropped to the ground and hit running.

The Rumpler rolled on for perhaps a hundred feet and piled up in a mass of flames against a stone wall at the far end. The Nieuports circled and headed back home.

For a moment, G-8 and Nippy stood there alone in the middle of the field. They turned at the same moment and looked at each other, and Nippy began to grin.

"Well, that takes care of that," he said.

G-8 nodded, but spoke in German. "At least we didn't have to set fire to that Rumpler as I planned."

Nippy came back in German. "This looks more like the real thing, Excellency."

Above the roar of the crackling flames, they heard a high-speed car traveling toward them from the direction of the front.

"How far are we from our objective?"

"Too far," G-8 said, "but a car can get us there by tonight sometime. I planned to get there before that, however."

THEY turned and walked together off toward the east where a road skirted the field. Before they reached the road, they saw the car. It came racing up and braked in a cloud of dust.

It was a large staff car. In it were a driver and a high officer. The driver leaped out and opened the door and the officer got down with dignity. He wore a major's insignia.

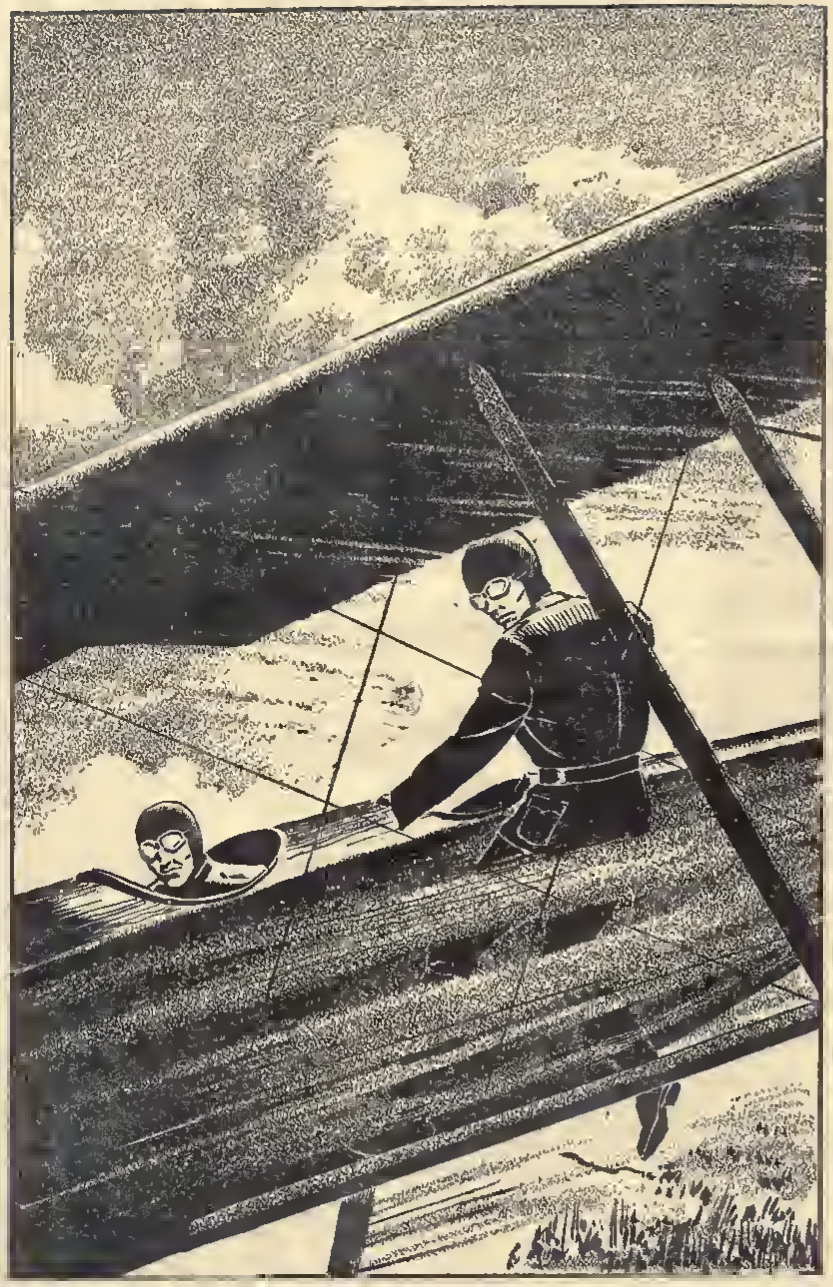
The major saluted. Nippy and G-8 returned the salute and climbed over the low stone fence bordering the road.

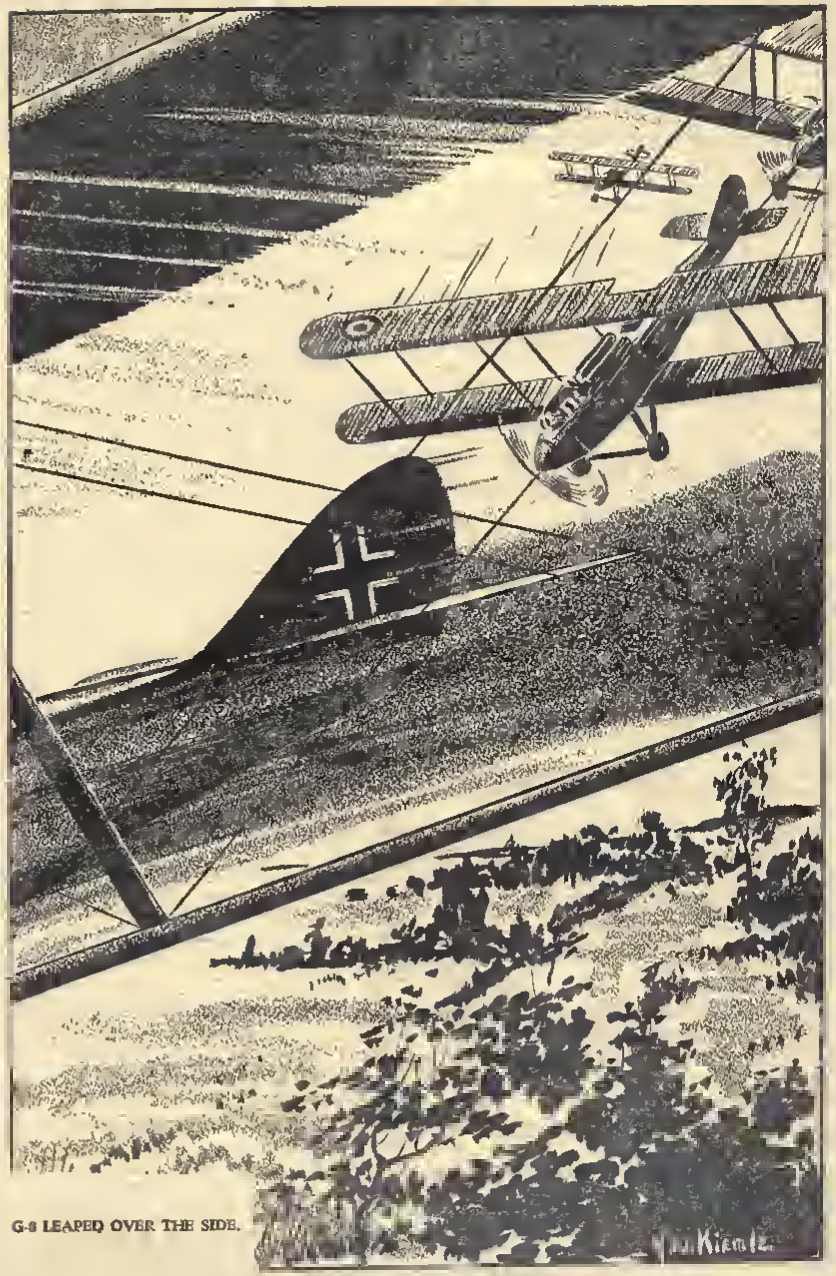
"*Bitte*, Excellency," the major said, "I did not expect to find you in this plane?"

G-8 blustered some. "Just whom did you expect to find, *Herr Major?*"

The major remembered then. He bowed and said, "Excuse me, Excellency. May I introduce myself. Major von Ordell, at your service."







G-8 LEAPED OVER THE SIDE.

"That is very fortunate," G-8 said. "I am General von Dietz. This is my adjutant, Herr Hauptmann Ernst. We were on our way to an important meeting. Could we have the use of your car, *Herr Major?*"

"I am honored," the major bowed.

He stepped back and motioned them to the car. "If you don't mind dropping me off at the next town on your way, I shall get another car for myself."

"That will not be necessary, *Herr Major,*" G-8 said. All this fitted in completely with his hopes and plans. When they reached the castle and the headquarters of Herr Goulon in the Black Forest, perhaps about evening, the major, a small man who could not be one of G-8's assistants, would verify the fact that the general had crashed in an airplane accident.

G-8 went on, "You will ride with us if you don't mind, *Herr Major.*"

The major bowed again and they got in and the driver shifted gears and they drove away.

Late in the afternoon they stopped at a little roadside inn to eat; then, at G-8's direction they drove on.

The driver seemed to know the country well. As they came in sight of the mountains of black fir, G-8 mentioned the location of the castle to the driver. The latter nodded and saluted.

IT WAS growing dark as they drew up through the thick trees to the castle above Greiner. Guards stood at the entrance and came out to meet them. There was a powerful brute of a *leutnant,* whose voice was a growl, like that of an angry beast.

"Who are you?"

G-8 leaned forward as the *leutnant* shot his flashlight on each man in the car. Instantly the *leutnant* stiffened and clicked his heels.

"Excellency," he said. "*Bitte,* I must ask for identification and orders. Herr Goulon insists."

G-8 handed over his forged papers. The *leutnant* looked at them and nodding, handed them back.

He looked at the papers of each in turn.

They got down and entered the castle. They walked through the great reception hall and down the corridor beyond, to the spacious office of Herr Goulon. The maniac stood up as they entered. His sunken eyes burned into G-8's. But they passed on to inspect the rest of the party.

The major told his story of the skybattle and the crash.

Herr Goulon said, "You must pardon my precautions. I am expecting a man I hope to kill—a spy known as G-8."

G-8 stiffened. "Do you mean to say you haven't captured him yet?" he stormed. "I was told that you had reported him dead!"

Herr Goulon deflated visibly. "A ruse," he said, "to make him fall into my trap." His voice carried very little conviction.

G-8 felt like laughing in the maniac's face.

But Herr Goulon was not satisfied. He reached for the phone and he said: "Stand where you are, *meine Herren.* I will verify what you have told me."

G-8 stiffened. This wasn't going to be good. If Goulon checked on the real General von Dietz, he'd find him elsewhere. Von Dietz, so far as G-8 knew, at last report, was on the Belgian front.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Murder Lab

THE voices of Herr Goulon and the general with him had died away. Bull was trembling a little with excitement.

"Come on, Battle. Shake a leg," he whispered. "Get me out of this so we can get started."

"Coming right over, sir."

He began untying the thongs that bound Bull's wrists and ankles.

"Think we've got much time to work, Battle, before someone comes back to look again?" Bull demanded.

Battle shrugged as he worked. "It's difficult to say, sir," he admitted. "One can never tell when the blighters will be returning, sir."

"Did you hear what Herr Goulon said?"

"Yes, sir."

"I've got an idea, Battle."

"Yes, sir. So have I."

"What's yours?"

"Well, sir. About that meeting at midnight. They made me very uncomfortable when they first brought me here, and before I got loose, I tried to think how we could throttle the whole group, sir. I was thinking—if we could get the agents of Herr Goulon together in one place and then blow them up."

"But the gas, Battle," Bull enthused. "That ought to do it better than anything else."

"Right, sir. That's what I was thinking. That would suggest the laboratory."

"That's exactly what I was working on," Bull said. He stood up and stretched his great muscular body, opened and closed his fists. "I'd sure like to plant these in Herr Goulon's face."

"And I would jolly well like to see it done, sir, but it seems that it would be most important to wait until we can get them all."

Bull strode softly over to the locked, iron-barred door.

"Well, you got us this far, Battle," Bull hissed. "How do we get out of here? The laboratory is down the corridor. The door was open and I passed it when they brought me here. And I've got a hunch. If we can get out of here, we'll see how it works."

"Have you any ideas about getting out of here, sir?"

"Know anything about picking a lock?" Bull demanded.

"A little," Battle said. He produced a piece of wire, heavy and stiff enough to work with.

With that they worked for a long time at the lock on the cell door, taking turns. Twice, while Bull worked the bent wire, he almost caught the tumblers—then lost them again. He broke out in a sweat.

FOOTSTEPS sounded on the hard paving outside. The footsteps came closer and then stopped. There was a tense moment of waiting, then the steps receded, going back down the corridor the way they had come.

They worked again at the lock. Battle's delicate touch finally did the trick—the tumblers clicked and the door swung open.

Bull peered out, and froze. A figure standing at the laboratory door. The man hadn't been there before. He whispered to Battle.

"Did that guard hear what we've been doing and saying?"

Battle peered out and drew back inside the dungeon again.

"Perhaps not, sir. He's farther down the passage. The dim light—but he's very big."

"He'll fall harder when I hit him," Bull breathed.

The big fellow felt about the floor until he found a loose rock. Now with the rock in his hand, he pushed out of the door and started silently down the side of the stone corridor.

Inch by inch he worked his way. The guard stood with his back toward Bull. He didn't seem armed, except for the Luger in his holster. The flap of the holster was fastened. That was good.

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Mendaco

Bull took another step and another closer to him—and the guard turned suddenly, when Bull was ten feet from him.

Each felt instant's indecision as their eyes met. Then Bull somehow knew what to do by the surprised, but mild expression on the huge guard's ugly face. He walked calmly on.

The guard said, "I did not hear you coming."

Bull nodded. "I am your relief," he said in his best German.

The guard shrugged and turned to go. But before he could reach a point directly in front of the half-open laboratory door, Bull swung the rock.

He caught the guard as he dropped him and dragged him down the corridor to the cell. Battle helped him. Battle said, "That was quick headwork, sir."

"He can take my place," Bull said. "Let's get him tied up, quick."

"That should help," Bull said.

There was nothing barring them from the laboratory now. Nothing, that is, but the two men working inside of the smelly underground room.

Bull pushed the door open a little more and peered in. Then he pointed out one of the figures to Battle.

"You're going to take his place."

He pushed Battle aside without waiting for an answer, walked calmly into the laboratory. The German he had pointed out to Battle was tall and gaunt. There was a smaller, older man working at a great machine where glass containers were being filled and sealed with a metal cap. He seemed engrossed in his work and did not turn.

"I am the new guard," Bull said.

The tall, gaunt German turned and eyed him, and then calmly nodded.

"This all seems very interesting," Bull said in his best German. It didn't matter so much whether his German was taken as good or not here. The main thing was to get this gaunt German to talk.

He did. He said, "*Ja.* Most interesting and most deadly." He pointed to a great pile of bottles, filled with a pale green liquid. "There you see gas enough to kill a million men, and women too, for that matter."

"Interesting," Bull said. "How quickly does it kill?"

"With the second breath," the German said. He worked on.

"I am Hans Schuller," Bull said. "Who are you?"

"I am Herr Doktor Weiner," the man said, continuing his work.

THE other German looked about for an instant and then directed his attention to his bottling. Bull moved over to him.

The little man turned and glanced at him; then went on with his work. Bull waited until he turned off the machine—then he struck.

The little man keeled over and lay on the floor quite still. A low cry came from the gaunt German.

"What are you doing?"

His back was toward the door as he faced Bull Martin. Battle slipped behind him. His hand lifted, fell, and the gaunt man collapsed.

They hid the little man under one of the work tables, covered him with some packing paper and carried the gaunt German into the dungeon. Hastily Battle changed clothes with the German chemist.

Bull studied Battle's face and that of the chemists. "You two aren't too far apart for looks," Bull said. "Have you got a little make-up?"

Battle said, "I've scarcely had a chance to carry any of the make-up with me."

Bull took another look at his face and the German's.

"You need some touching up," he said. "Wouldn't take much."

"I know the formula," Battle said. "If they have the proper chemicals in the laboratory. Perhaps I can mix a batch."

They hurried to the laboratory and Bull helped him pour out smelly stuff from various bottles and mix them in an earthen bowl. It took some time for the chemicals to join—there was a boiling process that took much too long for Bull—but when they were through, and Bull saw the transformed Battle he chuckled with satisfaction.

When the sound of stamping boots came to them, Battle was at the laboratory studiously compounding something he hoped would not explode in his face and Bull was standing outside the door, with the other guard's Luger at his side.

He stood stiff and menacing as Herr Goulon came striding down the corridor. There were two German officers with Herr Goulon.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Midnight Rendezvous

G-8 stood rigid, waiting, as Herr Goulon made a telephone call. He spoke to headquarters, mentioned the major's name.

The answer must have been satisfactory for he nodded his ugly head and hung up the phone.

Without further questioning, he rasped, "That seems to be correct, *Herr Major.* You may go with your driver."

The major left and Goulon turned to G-8 and Nippy.

"You will pardon my hesitancy, Your Excellency. I must make sure."

"I understand," G-8 said. "Now to get on with the business."

He stopped. The forged order of inspection he had presented might mean anything. He waited, anxious to know how Herr Goulon might interpret it.

The German actually tried to smile. It was a hideous attempt. He said, "Fortunately, you have come just in time, Excellency. My agents will all meet me tonight in *Der Grossvalla.* Perhaps you are wondering what *Der Grossvalla* is. You have heard of it, no doubt?"

"*Ja.* I have heard of it."

"But you do not know what it is." Herr Goulon cackled. "Since you will be permitted to go into *Der Grossvalla* tonight, I will let you in on my secret. It is a gigantic underground passage. A series of caverns that leads from below this castle, under the front lines, and comes up some distance behind the rear of the Allies. It is through this great passage that my agents come and go. Tonight they meet me in the great central chamber. Tonight I will give them their final instructions for a new phase of our terror campaign. From midnight on, we shall use a new gas I have had developed."

He got up from his seat behind his desk and strode toward the great door and the corridor beyond.

"Come. I will show you the entrance to *Der Grossvalla* and also my laboratory. I will show you, as well, my two prisoners."

G-8 saw Nippy grow tense. The Master Spy himself couldn't seem to get rid of a taut feeling in his middle.

They followed Herr Goulon across the great hall and down one flight of stairs and then another.

"*Der Grossvalla* is far underground," Herr Goulon said. "I discovered it during my cave explorations, before the war." A guard stood beside a door well down the corridor. He was a big, ugly looking brute, with a misshapen face and a powerful build.

Herr Goulon paused at the half-open door of the laboratory and motioned them to come in. The guard stood still, looking straight ahead. They passed him and Herr Goulon pointed to the gaunt, thin man at work at the bench. He pointed out the piles of bottles, sealed with metal stoppers. He explained that they would be taken into the central chamber very soon now and said, further, "You will honor me with your presence, Excellency."

G-8 bowed and said he would. "I would like very much to see these two prisoners."

They went out into the corridor and paused before the iron door. Herr Goulon said, "That is the one known as Bull Martin; the other one is the English servant known as Battle."

Nippy stood just behind G-8. He peered through and then his hand touched G-8's back. He began tapping out a message with only the pressure of his finger, as though he were operating a wireless key.

"These are not Bull and Battle here. I'll bet that's them in the laboratory."

G-8 nodded slowly as he asked, "And you are quite sure that you will have the other two very soon? Perhaps by morning?"

Herr Goulon looked relieved. "By morning, Excellency. Most certainly."

THEY moved on down the corridor. It grew steeper, going on down like a ramp as they walked on around a curve toward a great closed door. Herr Goulon produced a key from above a great jutting

rock and unlocked the door. Instantly, they could feel a draft of air blowing through the door and down into a great open chamber.

Herr Goulon's rasping voice made a series of echoes now as he said, "You will follow me, Excellency."

They walked for a long distance into the series of caverns.

"In a little over an hour," Herr Goulon said, "my agents will assemble here from all over France."

Already there were perhaps fifty standing against the side wall.

That draft of air was still blowing from the castle. Herr Goulon pointed to a stone rostrum at one side of the great underground theater. "I will stand there and speak to my agents," he said. "I will give the orders and then they will pass before the rostrum and receive their supply of bottles."

As he spoke, some of his brutes from the castle were bringing the gas supply.

G-8 took a bold step. He said to the maniac, "Herr Goulon, perhaps you have other matters to attend to. Suppose my adjutant and I carry out our inspection by ourselves."

Herr Goulon paused and his bloodshot eyes glinted curiously, then he seemed satisfied and nodded his ugly head. "Very well. I have one or two matters to attend to, Excellency."

Herr Goulon turned and limped away. G-8 watched him and then turned and walked back along the series of passages toward the castle dungeons.

The door into the dungeon section under the castle was open. They strode through the great opening and on past the cell.

Two of Herr Goulon's agents came out of the laboratory with more of the death liquid. They passed G-8 and Nippy with scarcely a glance.

G-8 entered the laboratory with an air of authority. He passed the big guard at the door and Nippy came after him.

There was no one inside except the tall, gaunt chemist. G-8 paused beside him and asked, "What is your name?"

He used his own voice, although he spoke in German.

The gaunt chemist turned and half opened his mouth. Then his expression changed completely and he leaped forward, gasping, "Stop it, Mister Bull."

G-8 ducked instinctively and spun round. Nippy stood on the other side of G-8. He had leaped in, but the blow was already falling. G-8 saw it coming. Bull was bringing down an iron bar on his head.

He ducked his head just in time, shifted quickly to the left and caught the bar.

The Master Spy couldn't help laughing for an instant. He said, "Have you been going around beating out the brains of every German general you see?"

Bull stared at them, weak, thunderstruck. "I thought we could maybe put you birds out and get in your uniforms and be in on the meeting tonight."

"You'll have to shop somewhere else," G-8 grinned. "What were your plans?"

HE SAW a strained expression on Battle's face, and suddenly heard a sound at the door. Herr Goulon stood in the doorway, and there was no way of telling how much he had heard.

G-8 nodded to the maniac. "I was just inspecting the laboratory," he said. "Most interesting. I shall see you at the meeting of your agents presently."

He spoke with an easy assurance he didn't feel, and rather to his surprise, Goulon gave a short nod and went on.

G-8 spun around to his Battle Aces. "Quick. Fill your pockets with bottles of the gas liquid. We must start down in another minute or two."

"We all go?" Bull hissed.

"All four of us. Hurry."

Two officers came to the laboratory door. One of them said, "There you are, Excellency. Herr Goulon asked me to make sure that you were not late."

"We were just going," G-8 said.

The Hauptmann waited. "I have orders to accompany you," he said and as Nippy and G-8 stepped out into the corridor the two officers fell in behind them.

They marched on through the wide and the narrow passages of the underground chambers, and then paused as they entered the great meeting place.

A thousand of the beast-men of Herr Goulon were assembled there. Herr Goulon was mounting the rostrum. The officer behind G-8 said in his ear, "You

will go up on the rostrum with Herr Goulon."

G-8 shook his head without turning.

"*Nein,*" he said. "I will stay here."

"*Bitte,* Excellency," the *Hauptmann* said. "I have my orders. Herr Goulon wishes you on the rostrum with him."

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Escape

AS YET, the Master Spy had not turned to look at the men behind him. He had a feeling, however, that there was a Luger leveled at his back —that the game was up and Goulon was playing with him as a cat toys with a mouse.

Then there was sudden action behind him. He heard a yelled curse that was cut off in the middle. A Luger spat and G-8 whirled. He saw Bull and Battle in action. They'd leapt on the two officers who had been behind him.

G-8's Luger was out. It spat flame and death and he whirled and let fly with one of the gas bottles. It burst in the midst of the throng of the now milling brute agents. They started surging for the north entrance. But another bottle and another burst among them and the thin, slightly greenish vapor rose and spread like a plague over them.

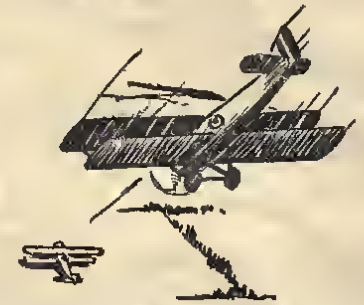
Battle and Bull and Nippy were letting fly with some of their bottles as they plunged back into the passage. The vapor was rising from the broken bottles. A mad brute who was close by came lunging through the vapor, coughing.

G-8's Luger cracked and the agent pitched on his face, coughed twice more and lay still.

Herr Goulon had leaped from the rostrum and was screaming like a beast gone mad. He came tearing at them, but two bottles of his own stuff burst in front of him.

They came racing through the heavy door and slammed that shut and locked it from the castle side. That would hold the others in that death trap until they were dead. The gas, carried by the draft, would already have the south shaft choked with the fumes.

They dashed on, up one flight of stairs



and then another and into the great hall. There was no one in sight. The place was deserted.

G-8 jerked his head toward the outside gates.

"We're all going back the same way you and Battle came over," he said. "When I came in, I saw the Salmson and the D.H. half hidden in that field back of the castle."

Even there, no one was on guard. Every living agent and guard of Herr Goulon had been called into the maze of caverns that now were filled, perhaps forever, with the deadly gas.

The Salmson and the Liberty engines roared out in the night. Flame spat from the exhaust stacks. They warmed the engines and, Bull and Battle in the Salmson, G-8 and Nippy in the D.H., went thundering off toward the south and home.

Searchlights over the front cut the blackness of the night with their beams. Then, out of the blackness came a flock of diving, screaming Fokkers to the attack.

While the searchlight beams lashed the night sky, the Fokkers dived and lunged and their machine guns chattered.

But the Spandau guns of the Fokkers were not the only guns that blasted that night. For Nippy Weston in the back of the D.H. and Battle at the twin Lewis guns of the Salmson were doing their share. And now and then in that wild running fight, a Fokker fell with sparks and smoke pouring out of it to form a gigantic tracer in the sky.

"This," Nippy yelled, "is the nuts!"

Then Yank searchlights slashed the night skies and the Heinie pursuits decided to head back for home. The two Allied planes went rumbling on straight for Le Bourget.



"YOU'D BETTER TALK, CAPTAIN GUYNE. THE COGNAC YOU DRANK WAS POISONED!"

KEEP 'EM SPYING!

The boys all expected anything of Doc Bowker—but they never thought he'd fall in love with Germany's deadliest woman spy!

CAPTAIN LACEY, our skipper of the 69th Pursuit Squadron, was sure anxious. He stood in front of our hangar waiting and watching the northeastern sky. He was kind of like a grounded eagle waiting for the brood to come home.

The captain had the toughest job on the field because while Bill, my partner, and I had to worry about doing the little

A Greaseball Joe Story

stuff like having right valve clearances and tight bearings and such like any greaseballs, the skipper had the worries of the whole outfit on his shoulders.

And this job that he was trying to get done seemed like about the toughest thing the old 69th Pursuits had ever tackled. A German bombardment squadron with a flock of new Rumpler planes for day bombing had moved up to within range of Paris and a lot of very important objectives, and they'd come slipping over when you least expected them, give out with a load of destruction and get back before we could spot them. Funny thing was that our boys, that is the crazy gang of pilots of the 69th, never were around when they were needed, which burned the skipper to a cinder.

Well, that phantom light bomber outfit of the Germans had done their dirty work three days before. We'd had a big drive on and they had gone over, like they knew more about it than we did, and had blown up our hidden ammunition dump for the drive just twenty-four hours before it was to come off. Now, any fool knows that you don't move up ammunition enough for a major drive in twenty-four hours. Not through that French mud, you don't. So that had been the last crimp they'd put in us—the last knot that Jerry had tied in our tail.

So the skipper had been sending our boys out to locate the base of these fast light bombers. If and when they found the base, we could go over and blast them out and cripple them. But so far nothing had been spotted big enough to let those Rumplers get off.

Now Captain Lacey was standing there, yanking on his right ear-lobe and kind of cursing softly to himself and watching for the boys.

I guess he'd been waiting for fifteen minutes or more when I heard him yip, "Here they come!" and then he said, "What the—" and stopped short.

Bill and I had been working just inside our hangar door so we could run out when we got word from the skipper. We wanted to stand out there with him and watch, but that wouldn't be right because who were we, a couple of greasehalls to stand out there and not get our work done.

So we rushed out and then all at once, we saw what the skipper was squawking about. We could see our Spads coming in low and we started to count, but before we got up to four, we caught sight of one of the Spads diving down toward the ground.

Now this guy wasn't going down for a forced landing. His Hisso was revving up nice and full and he was diving like a hawk on a sparrow. We just caught sight of him before he dropped down behind a little hill northeast of our field. He came zooming up in sight again and then he dived once more.

At that distance we couldn't tell who it was. We hadn't seen him break formation and the planes were coming just about in line, flying low down, so we couldn't see the gap he had left.

"What in the name of this and that," the skipper wanted to know, "is eating that bird, whoever he is? Certainly that German airdrome isn't over there within a mile of this field."

The Spad zoomed up and then dived again. It did this three more times, then came slipping over the hill and on into the field.

The rest of the boys had already landed their Spads. They were all there. We hadn't had any serious trouble with the enemy in the way of dogfights for some time, but you never know. So we always counted, Bill and I, when the boys came back and when we counted enough, we always breathed easier. That gang of the 69th, while they were crazy as a pack of loons, were the greatest guys in the world.

Well, there they were, safely on the ground now, climbing out of their ships. There was Buzz Hartin, our pal and Senior Flight Leader. Buzz usually kept us posted as to what went on among the officers that we didn't see.

Then there was Jasper Peck, that lanky hog specialist from out in the pig country, and Jack Petley, son of the American chocolate king, and Charlie Gray and George Conrad. Guy Stratton and Hank Speck, the amateur detective, and John Gilmore, the movie star and, well, you know them all, mostly.

They were all there, except Doc Bowker. So we knew that this was Doc com-

ing in over the field boundary now.

Maybe I should explain right here that at this period none of us were surprised at anything we saw Doc Bowker do. The poor guy was in love. Yes, sir—in love right up to his ears, and his ears set pretty high on his head, too.

Of all the guys to get caught! You may remember that Doc Bowker was the wise guy of the 69th. There wasn't anything that came up that Doc Bowker didn't have a solution for, with the present exception. Like I say, the poor oaf was in love and he just didn't have time for anything else.

Doc was the guy who had studied just enough in medical school so he thought he knew everything. Like they say a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, and that was the way it was with Doc. Several times during that first World War he came close to killing guys because he thought he knew all there was to know about medicine.

WELL, you'd think that Doc would have known better than to get mixed up with this frill named Lili. Now don't get me wrong. So far as I could tell, there was absolutely nothing wrong with Lili either mentally or morally, and certainly not physically. She certainly was the click-click of super-super.

She was one of these blonde, brown-eyed French dolls, just tall enough and just—well, you know. And brother, when she smiled just a little and turned those big brown eyes on you, your heart melted like butter in July.

Of course we all said that Doc should know better because she was a heart-breaker if I ever saw one, but then among the mechanics and officers, there sure was a lot of hearts laid out to break if she had looked our way long enough. What made everybody kind of mystified, was that she took after Doc Bowker.

I don't mean to say that Doc was the worst looking guy in the outfit. But he wasn't the best looking guy, by a mile.

There was Charlie Gray, if you wanted a guy for looks. Charlie owned that little "two dogs long and a half a dog high" pup named Sausage, you remember. The dog with the sensitive tail.

And of course there was John Gilmore, the screen lover we had with us. I could name others, George Conrad and—

But anyway, Lili went for Doc Bowker and like Shakespeare says, "There is no accounting for love among bogs, jackasses or people." That Shakespeare was pretty smart.

Well, Doc gets down and climbs out of his Spad and without so much as a good morning, go to Havana or howdy, he starts right off on foot for the northeast where he had been diving and zooming around the countryside.

Captain Lacey lets out a bellow, "Hey, Doc! Where do you think you're going?"

Doc didn't seem to hear. He kept right on hiking across the field. Captain Lacey growled deep down in his throat like a bomber tuning up, and he yanked out his Colt automatic.

It kind of scared me at first. I guess it scared Buzz Hartin, too, because just as the gun went off, Buzz knocked up the skipper's arm.

Captain Lacey barks, "What did you want to do that for? I might have shot Doc!"

"You weren't trying to shoot him?" Buzz said.

"Of course not, you fool. I'm trying to stop him! That guy's got something on his mind stronger than military rules, and I'm going to scare it out of him."

So he took another aim and pulled the trigger again—he pulled it several times, and we could see the dirt kick up in front of Doc.

Doc seemed to come to then. He stopped and turned around.

"Come back, you deaf idiot!" the skipper yelled to him. "Come back before I miss your path and plug you."

That seemed to wake Doc up and he turned around and came back. He looked kind of sheepish, but still plenty mad.

"Now where did you think you were going?" Captain Lacey demanded.

"Lili is two-timing me," Doc said, and his voice choked like he was going to break out in tears. "I saw it from the air."

Buzz Hartin cut in, "Was that Lili walking back from that patch of woods?"

"You saw it too?" Doc almost sobs.

"Who could miss it?" Jack Petley said, grinning.

It was funny now to see how the guys couldn't help almost laughing at Doc. They all wanted to say, "I told you so," being sore because Lili hadn't gone for them.

Anyway, Captain Lacey said, "Any of you have any luck today?"

"We got the drome spotted this time," Buzz Hartin grinned. "They got the planes hidden under nets at the edge of a woods. If we'd had bombs we could have blasted them."

"You wouldn't kid me?" Captain Lacey demanded.

"Certainly not, Skipper," Buzz tells him. "We got it spotted all right. All we're waiting for is the word to go bomb them out."

DOC BOWKER was standing there, kind of weaving toward the north end of the field and looking like he's about to have a hemorrhage. Finally he cut in with, "Excuse me, sir. I got to find out. That French officer she was with. I—"

"Will you get out of here?" Captain Lacey said, and then as Doc starts off, Lacey barks, "Wait. Did you see anything of that enemy bomber drome?"

"What enemy drome?" Doc says, looking like an idiot.

"The enemy drome. The bombardment—" The skipper is fit to be tied.

"Oh, yes, sir. I mean, oo sir. I mean I didn't—"

Captain Lacey waved his hand in disgust. "Get outa here before I slap you conscious," he yelled, and Doc got.

He turned to Buzz. "Did the enemy realize that you had spotted them?"

"Maybe," Buzz said, "but before we took off, I told the boys not to make any sign if we did spot it. We didn't make a move when we came past."

"Are you sure?"

Buzz nodded. "Sure as a bunny rabbit's tail," he said. "We were flying up this level valley, about twenty feet off the ground. We could look over to the right and see just a glimpse of planes under the camouflage top."

"Good. Then tomorrow at dawn, we blast that place to bits," the skipper announced. "You birds can take a rest for the remainder of the day—no, wait. We'll have two more patrols this afternoon."

Buzz and the boys looked kind of sour.

"I want the patrols to continue. Map one patrol about five miles east of the enemy base," the skipper said. "Then another about ten miles on the other side. That will give them the idea that we haven't spotted them yet."

Well, we didn't think much more about Doc Bowker until he came back about noon, just in time for mess. Bill and I were on our way to mechanics' mess, as a matter of fact, and Bill was the guy that spotted Doc coming through the gate onto the field.

"Would you look at that rooster strut!" Bill said.

I couldn't help noticing it. He was walking like he had springs in his heels. I said, "Something has happened to that guy, but good. He's stepping higher than a brush salesman just out of pep meeting."

Bill and I ambled around so we'd pass Doc on our way to chow. It isn't always that a flying officer spills his inner thoughts to a greaseball, but Doc, I guess, couldn't hold in any longer and since we were the first ones on the field that he saw, he spilled.

"It was her cousin," Doc says loud enough to hear down to headquarters. You'da thought he'd just won a dogfight. "It was her cousin. He's the great French ace, Captain Charles Guyne."

He breezed past and we could hear him breaking the glad tidings to one and all that he met as he went on toward chow.

But Bill and I just stood there shaking our heads. We started walking again and after a while Bill says, "You never can tell how dumb a guy is until a dame nails him."

"Ain't it the truth," I said. "Why that cousin gag is so old it has got moss on the north side."

Of course if we were all brothers and stuff like that, we should be feeling very sorry about Doc getting taken in like this, but if any of the pilots did feel sorry for him they showed it by laughing. Boy, how they laughed. And it was twice as funny because Doc was very sincere and positive that there was no chance of his Lili ever lying to him. Why, she was even going to come and visit the field this very afternoon and bring her cousin,

Captain Guyne, witb her and he would maybe inspect our equipment and the field.

This of course would be quite an honor and we all began getting ready for this break.

Bill, meantime, kept kind of silent during the afternoon like he was thinking about something. I asked him once what was eating him and he said he was just thinking about something and if it hatched, he'd tell me about it.

WELL, the boys left on the first afternoon patrol about one-thirty. They came back in an hour and we worked on the planes and had them warmed up for a three-thirty patrol, and they went out again.

All the Spads got back about four-thirty and everybody was okay. We were always glad of that.

It was about five or a little after when up comes a carriage to the gate. It is one of those French cabs like they drive down the boulevard in Paris, and the dames and their guys sit there like they're on parade and not taking a ride just for fun. That's the way this carriage came onto the field.

We all recognized Lili in the seat, and she has this silly little black lace parasol over her to shut out the sunshine. Beside her is this French officer. He is very good looking as Frenchmen go, a big guy and kind of a combination floor-walker and Georges Carpentier, maybe on the floor-walker side slightly.

We see this when he gets out and helps Lili down and Doc Bowker comes over and helps too, like Horatio at the bridge or maybe I mean Sir Walter Raleigh at the puddle.

Anyway, they get out and then I get the drift a little of Bill being silent. He nudges me and he says, "That's him. That's Captain Guyne all right."

Well, I don't pay much attention because the guy looked like Guyne to me, too. With all the pictures of this great French ace that had been around in papers and magazines, you couldn't miss him. So I think nothing more about Bill acting queer and saying those things until we are working on our planes just outside our hangar and Captain Lacey and Captain Guyne are walking by with Doc and his dame trailing behind.

Captain Guyne pauses here and there to say something in his French English and when he gets pretty close, Bill, my partner, says, "*Beaucoup, oui, oui!*" real loud.

I jumped. This Captain Guyne might think Bill was making fun of his French, and that wouldn't be good.

But the Frenchman didn't turn around or pay any attention.

I says to Bill, "Have you gone nuts, brother? That guy will come over and bat your ears down if he thinks you are making cracks at him."

Now what do you think the guy does? Like I was in China or maybe Hoboken, he lets out another yip and it's the same as the first. He says, "*Beaucoup, oui, oui!*" and this time he says it louder.

Well, you know me. Tending to my own business so I don't get into trouble, I turn around and am working like this and that in case the fireworks should start. For this Captain Guyne cannot help but hear Bill shouting this time and I do not want him to think that I am doing it.

But nothing happens. I turn around in a minute to sneak a look and there goes Guyne and Captain Lacey right on down the line like nothing was happening.

Right then Bill says, "That's funny," and he looks like he is lost in the middle of a Chinese puzzle.

"Funny?" I cannot help but exclaim. "That is positively nuts and the next time you think you're going to try to get me in a jam you can think again because—"

"Keep your shirt on, Joe," Bill says. "I was trying something with this Captain Guyne."

"I'll say you were trying something," I tell him. "You were trying to get a firing squad to puncture your left breast pocket. What's the idea, lame-brain?"

"Well, you see," Bill says, "it happened before I teamed up with the 69th and got to be your loving partner in grease. I was very young and eager in them days and was learning my French worse than I thought, but enthusiastically."

"Sooo—" I prompted him.

"Well, I was stationed at a French

field when I first landed and I had been studying my French book and such along with mechanics and nuts and bolts and the like. And this Captain Charles Guyne was there then. He was already an ace with about nine enemy planes to his credit."

"This," I says, trying to act melodramatic, "is a portion of ynur sordid past which you have not revealed to me, William."

"I got lots of 'em," be says. "Anyway, I was doing some work for this captain and he was a very nice guy then and when he would ask me something in his French English, I would answer in my best French which consisted at that time of ahout four or five words."

"Brother, you learn slow, don't you?" I said. "That's about all the French you know now."

Bill ignores me and goes on. He says, "Well, I'd always answer his questions with *'Beaucoup, oui, oui!'* " He laughed. "That tickled Captain Guyne so he got to calling me *'Beaucoup, oui, oui!'* and now I thought I would spill it and he might remember."

I shook my head. "Apparently he doesn't," I said.

"Yeah," Bill said, kind of sad. "That guy's about the greatest ace in France now, and I guess he's forgot me and everything else back in the old days."

SO WE went on working and the captain and the Frenchman went on out of sight and we let it go at that. That is, I let it go, but Bill didn't.

I guess it was before mess and we were leaving when he said, "There comes Captain Guyne again. He's alone. I'm going to speak to him."

Well, I waited. It was getting dark and this Captain Guyne was sauntering along from one hangar to another, like he was inspecting the place all hy himself.

When he gets to our hangar, Bill salutes and says, *"Beaucoup, oui, oui,* Captain Guyne."

The captain looks at him, nods and salutes and is passing by, and Bill says, "You don't remember me? It was at Sarnou a long time ago."

The captain looks at him sharp and then smiles and says, *"Oui,* of course. You are a—"

"Mechanic," Bill said.

"Yes, of course I remember you. How are you?"

"Fine, sir," Bill said and he saluted, and the captain saluted, and that was all there was to it.

During mess I said, "Well, now you've had your little visit with your old *beaucoup oui oui,* are you satisfied?"

"Not entirely," Bill said, but he didn't say anything more, and after mess we had to work on into the night to be sure that all the Spads were ready to go out next morning at dawn.

We went to bed later without seeing anything more of Captain Guyne, and then we got up very early and got the Spads warmed for the raid, saw that the bombs were in the racks, and then we watched the Spads take off.

As Bill and I stood there, be says suddenly to himself, "Dogonnit, that isn't Captain Guyne!"

"What?" I almost shouted.

"That isn't Captain Guyne," Bill says. "That's a guy who looks like him and acts like him, but not enough."

"Are you sure?"

"Positive," Bill says. "He didn't talk or smile or laugh like Guyne. It isn't him."

"So what?" I says. "He's some other guy who is cutting Doc out with this dame, Lili."

"What's he doing pretending to be Captain Guyne?" Bill said.

"Who cares?" I said, and then it struck me and I said, "Hey, holy gee, that's rigbt. If be isn't Guyne, who is he?"

"I've been trying to figure that one out," Bill said.

"Well, this is a fat time to figure out that he isn't Guyne, after our Spads have taken off," I told him. "How do we know that the guy didn't do something to those Spads last night while he was around here?"

"They warmed up and ran okay just now, and they got off," Bill said.

Just then the telephone bell rang and it was an officer up at the front saying that one of our planes had come down in his area. It seemed to have run out of gasoline, and the pilot had asked him to send a crew up to make repairs. The pilot was Buzz Hartin.

Well, Bill and I told the skipper that and what Bill had realized about Guyne, and we left the skipper coming to a boil and started off toward the front in the wrecker truck.

The road was all mud and full of ruts, and the old wrecking truck just hobbled along because we had to drive her carefully to make her hold together at all on this rough road.

We didn't hear any sounds of engines until we'd got about four miles away from the field, and then came the rumble of a Hisso. But it wasn't running good. Bill and I being the best mechanics this side of Issoudon could tell that easy.

This Hisso was hitting on all eight, but she didn't have any zip to her. She sounded as if she was running at half throttle, only now and then she'd cough like her throat was dry.

The Spad was too far away for us to tell whose ship it was, but we were sure it belonged to one of our pilots.

We got a few glimpses of it and then it ducked down and we didn't hear the roar any more, and we were afraid it had gone down before it got back to our field.

All this stuff is a pain in the neck to a mechanic because it is his job to keep those planes in repair and keep 'em flying, as we say now. So Bill and I felt very bad about this business of our planes going down.

We didn't see a sign of any other planes on the way. A couple of D.H.'s thundered over, but they belonged to another outfit.

When we got up near the front, we found Buzz Hartin sitting on what had been a stone fence before the war. Now it was just a pile of rocks. He had a half-dozen infantrymen around him and was filling them with the well-known old baloney about flying heroes and such.

Buzz looked at us like we'd come late on purpose, and he said, "If you'd been two days longer we could have spent Christmas together. What did you birds do, crawl in on your hands and knees?"

We ignored him and went to work to find out why the Spad wasn't clicking.

"It's just like my gas line was turned off," Buzz said, "only any fool can see that it isn't. Even you could tell that, Joe."

Well, of course the gas line wasn't turned off. And it wasn't like the line was shut off either. We took the carburetor jet cover off and peeked in, and the bowl was full of gas. So we turned her over and she started up nice as you please.

And knowing Buzz very well I could say, "Brother, it looks like you were taking your well-known afternoon nap. But did you have to call us way up here over the rocky road to Dublin to wake you up, sir?"

"I would have you know, my short-feathered friend," Buzz says, indignant, "that this was no rest cure I was on when it happened. I was flying along with the others and we were all ready to blast Uncle Wilhelm out of hiding, when Henrietta gives a couple of sneezes and down we come."

I HAVE perhaps forgotten to mention that in landing on the rough territory back of our front, Buzz had done his Spad no good to the extent of a wrecked landing gear, a cracked wing-tip and what goes with it. By the time we got there the infantry had hoisted the nose up on some ammunition cases and the prop having stopped straight across hadn't been damaged.

Well, propped up on the cases and running sweet as a dream about a blonde it made Buzz look very silly.

"You can see how sweet she runs," I says and with that the Hisso says, "Ka-chow—kaplunk—ugh!" and stops cold.

Buzz kind of grins and says, "Well, gentlemen, this is where I came in. I'll be running back in yon motorcycle sidecar. See you boys next spring."

So he left us, the louse, and it was evening before Bill and I got that Spad apart and loaded on the truck and back to the field.

By now, seems like lots of things had happened back there. Word had come in during the day that every one of our pilots had gone out and run short of gasoline, but with their tanks full and their racks loaded with bombs.

Doc Bowker, of all guys, was the only one who had got back to the field. That had been Doc we'd seen getting back, and he'd just made the field by an eyelash.

His mechanics had found his gas line plugged with something queer, like a thick, jelly substance that strung out kind of like a snake and stuck in the lead-off pipe.

Well, Doc of course was still boiling, and by the time we got there, he and Captain Lacey had figured out that maybe this dame and the guy she called her cousin bad had something to do with it.

So while Bill and I stripped the tank assembly of Buzz's ship and a couple of others that were being dragged in, Captain Lacey and Doc Bowker went into town to see what they could see.

We found the stoppage all right, and it was just like they'd found in Doc's gas line. Just like this kind of a jelly rope that had plugged the line like a poisoned snake had got stuck there.

The rest of the crates were being brought in, and they were a sorry lot. Wings cracked and landing gears busted—and then we got the bad news that somebody had seen Jack Petley go down behind the German lines. Seems he was too far over when the line plugged and he couldn't get back. That was all anybody knew.

The more things that happened, the madder we got and so the whole personnel was pretty hopping by the time Captain Lacey and Doc Bowker and Buzz Hartin got back with this guy who called himself Captain Charles Guyne.

We figured, of course, that if they did find him at Joliere they'd have his head knocked off by the time they got him back to the field.

So we got the shock of our lives when we saw the skipper's car roll through the gate and saw the whole gang laughing and carrying on like a pack of drunken byenas.

I guess maybe twenty minutes must have passed and then Buzz Hartin came down to our hangar and said, "Come on up to headquarters. Got a little party on and I got you boys in on it."

"Look, Buzz," Bill says, "there is a fisby smell around bere. What goes?"

"It's a gag that Doc worked up," Buzz says. "We want you to come down and have a drink or two and then—Bill, you said you used to know him?"

Bill nods as we're already walking toward headquarters.

"The skipper wants you to start talking about where you used to know the real Guyne. Can you do that?"

"For a drink," Bill says, brightening, "I can do almost anything, almost."

So there we are at beadquarters and this Frenchman kind of sobers np and looks at us as though he isn't sure what goes on. Bill doesn't look at him, but takes the drink that Doc is handing bim and I get one, too. It is very good cognac, and I nurse mine along and just sit back and watch Bill and this Frog.

I get the idea the Frog thinks he recognizes Bill as the guy who spoke to him before, but he isn't too sure. Tben Bill starts talking to him, "Do you remember back at—" and stuff like that.

Well, that goes on for a little while and I'm getting bored, and I have another drink and start getting sleepy and then all at once I hear a plane.

Right away I know that the engine I hear is no French machine but should be marked "Made in Germany" because it is a Mercedes and no mistake.

I get to my feet and say, "Listen, that's a Fokker."

Bill says, "And it's coming in to land."

Well, everybody else gets excited and next thing we know, the plane has landed and there is Jack Petley! He's got a touch of blood here and there and looks kind of weak, so they bring him into beadquarters.

A surgeon comes up from the field hospital and takes eare of Jack where he has been nicked and nibbled at by

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German bullets here and there. Seems he has overheard some stuff and has managed to escape and steal a German plane and fly back.

Well, as Jack talks I see that all at once Captain Lacey has taken out his shooting iron and has our French friend covered.

"I learned that an enemy agent located here has everything arranged," Jack says. "Seems there is a special base south of Paris that the hidden German squadron wants to blast. It's the storage space for the new Lewisite gas we've brought over. The wind will be right tonight at midnight and they figure to come over and blow it up. Then the gas will roll right over Paris and kill everybody there."

The Frenchman went white and then he exploded, "That is impossible. That gas storage place is too far away. The German bombers cannot fly that far."

JACK PETLEY grins kind of weakly at him and he says, "That's where you come in. Q-Nine. At least I assume you're the Q-Nine I heard the Krauts talking about. You are to have arrangements made for refuelling at a certain field east of Paris. You have already bribed certain Frenchmen to have gasoline waiting there for the German ships. You have a wireless somewhere near here and as the German bombers go over, you will wireless them directions to the field in code."

"That is a lie!" the Frog said.

"For your own good," Lacey said, and there was frost on his words, "you'd better start talking."

"I do not know what you mean," the Frog stammered.

"You'll soon find out," Lacey countered. "You've been drinking out of one bottle tonight. The rest of us, if you remember, haven't touched it. We suspected you were the man we wanted. So we poisoned that bottle of liquor."

He swallowed and Lacey laughed at him.

"I think you're going to talk," he said. "There is an antidote for the slow poison you've been drinking. Tell us what we want to know and you get the antidote. If you don't tell us in three hours, you won't ever tell, because you'll be dead by that time. And what kind of flowers will you have?"

I never saw a guy turn so white. I didn't know they could. The Frog starts gibbering.

"Now," he turned to the Frog again who we realized by now was more German than French. "You'll take us to the wireless set and show us how to operate it. And you will now produce the code book which you planned to use for this job."

"*Oui, oui,*" the guy says, fishing it out of a pocket up behind his coat.

"Come on," Lacey said, motioning with his automatic. "Let's go."

Doc Bowker stayed at the desk. He was writing stuff on a pad. Bill and I waited for him while Buzz Hartin went ahead with the skipper.

When Doc finished writing, we followed him out and caught up with Lacey and the Frog and Buzz. Pretty soon we got to the woods, with flashlights to help, and there in a box that was buried under a pile of leaves, was the wireless set.

Captain Lacey and Buzz Hartin took the Frog back and Bill and Doc and I stayed there by the wireless.

"I haven't figured out any of this, much," I said while we waited to hear the German bombers come over. "Was there poison in that liquor?"

Doc squeezed out a little laugh because he was pretty mad in the main. "Naw," he said. "Nothing but good liquor in that bottle. But the Frog thought it was poisoned, or he was scared to think it wasn't."

"What's the skipper going to give him for an antidote?" I asked.

Doc chuckled. "A special Mickey Finn. For a while he'll be scared it will kill him and then he'll be scared that it won't, he'll be feeling so bad. He won't even care when they turn him over to Intelligence, the Judge Advocate, prison and a firing squad."

It kind of hurt me to say it but I got it out finally. I says, "I suppose Lili will end up in a mess like that, too."

"I'll say she will, the two-timing, double-crossing Heinie spy," Doc says, mad enough to dent the galley stove lid with his teeth "What a sucker I was. I told her everything she asked me. If I ever look at another woman, I hope one of you guys shoots me."

"Right," I said, "and I'll catch the dame on the rebound. But it sure seems

too bad to spoil a good thing like Lili with a firing squad."

"She'll likely get twenty years in the jug," Doc says, "and that will be commuted a year after the war ends by the general she gets to marry her."

All at once we were still as nothing—we could hear the Rumplers churning toward us. "Let's go!" Doc says.

I began cranking the generator and Bill held the code book and the message that Doc had worked out. Doc himself began working the key, sending a code message I couldn't figure out.

He stopped finally and mopped his forehead with his sleeve.

"That should hold the Huns," he said, "but for a while I thought we were sunk." Then he started to tell us the rest.

"We sure looked like goners when every plane but mine turned up a wreck," Doc said. "Then I got to figuring this thing out. And when I ran up against a stone wall, Jack Petley came in with the dope that he'd learned in Germany. But even then I couldn't quite put all the pieces together. We couldn't do a thing, because we only had one or two Spads. That Frog had worked everything out against us very neat."

Doc was getting dramatic.

"Then I thought of that wireless message. He was going to direct the German bombers to a field where they could refuel in the night. So I wrote instructions to be sent to another field and left them on Captain Lacey's desk. He'll see that everything is set at the field I mentioned. I wirelessed the German bombers directions to that field. And when they get there, boy, will they find a reception. When they all get down, they'll find a flock of Yanks with hand machine guns waiting for them, instead of tins of gasoline being dished out by thugs who have sold out for cash to the Germans."

He sighed. "But you know," he said, "there's only one thing wrong with this whole business."

"What's that?" I asked.

"They wouldn't let me work on Jack Petley when he came back all banged up. I coulda done a better job than that surgeon!"

THREE GO BACK!

By J. Leslie Mitchell

A sky monster, lapis and azure-blue, it sailed out of the heat-haze that all morning had been drifting westward from the Bay of Biscay. It startled the crew of the Rio tramp and there was a momentary scurry of grimy off-watches reaching the deck, and a great upward gape of astounded eyes. Then the second engineer, a knowledgeable man, voiced explanations.

"It'll be the airship *Magellan's Cloud* on her return voyage."

The Third spat, not disparagingly, but because the fumes of the engine-room were still in his throat. "Where to?"

"Man, you're unco' ignorant. Noo York. She's been lying off for weather at Paris nearly a week, Sparks says."

A subdued buzz and crackle. A tapping that presently ceased. High up against a cloudless sky, the airship quivered remoter in the Atlantic sunshine.

The Rio tramp chugged northeastward. One or two of the crew still stood on deck, watching the aerial voyageur blend with the August sunhaze and the bubble walls of seascape till it disappeared.

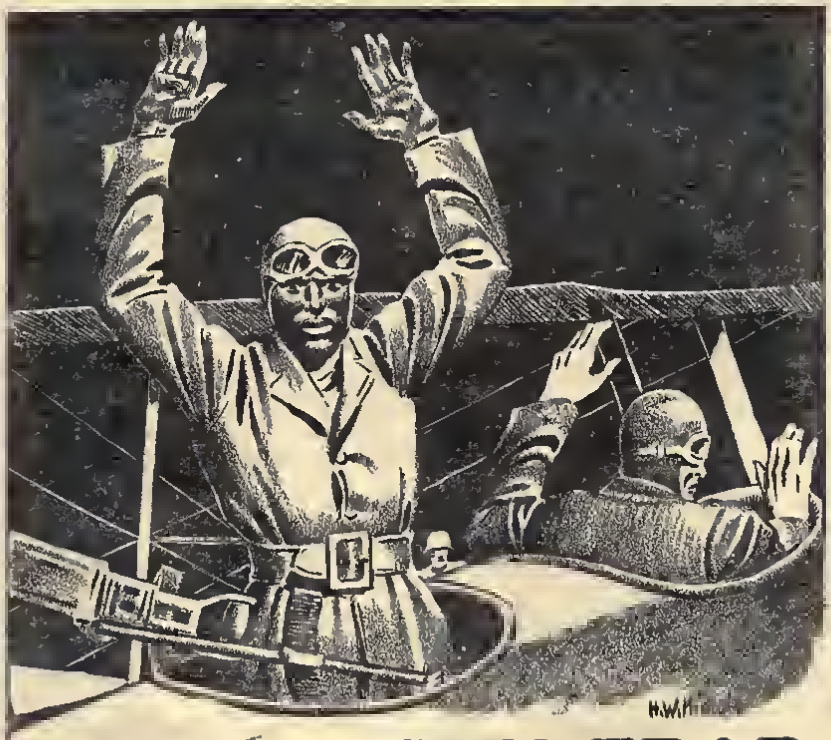


And that was the last the world ever saw of the airship *Magellan's Cloud*.

They died, most of them, but three survived—survived to live in another age and another unknown land to write the history of civilization twenty million years before it happened—and show their *ancestors* the hope of a better world!

This full book-length novel by J. Leslie Mitchell, a recognized classic in the field of fantastic literature, appears in the big December issue of FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES. Get your copy now!







THEY WERE ONLY TWO—YET THE GERMANS SEEMED AFRAID. . . .

SKY TRAP FOR THE FALCON

An Adventure of the Red Falcon

WITH the speed of a searchlight beam slashing into darkness, the crimson plane of the Red Falcon charged through the night for another raid.

The pilot was Barry Rand. He was wanted by the firing squads of his bitter enemies, the Germans as well as those from his own side of the lines. He was a man without a country, this dashing Yank renegade, and death leered at him from every quarter.

Behind him crouched a huge black form. It was Sika, the gigantic Senegalese negro chief, who had been found by Barry Rand after wandering from his French Senegal Regiment crazed by shock and wounds. Then in a hideout in the Vosges Mountains, Rand had nursed the giant chief back to health.

These two were a strange pair. They had worked wonders in building a plane out of parts of other planes that had been wrecked in the rugged depths of the Vosges Mountains. The wings were from a Spad and would hold together in a dive. The fuselage was from a German Fokker

Doomed to die by firing squad at dawn, the Red Falcon fought his greatest battle, for the right to answer the challenge of that flaming death trap in the sky—which no plane could approach and survive!

D-7. It was of light steel tubing, welded together with infinite German skill. A second cockpit had been built behind the pilot's seat so that the giant Sika could balance the great weight of the Liberty engine on the nose. There were certain tricks to flying this sleek crate which Barry Rand had mastered and later taught Sika.

No markings appeared on this death crate, no circles, crosses or signs of any kind to make it Allied or German. It was painted a brilliant red, the color of blood, from rudder-tip to prop-spinner, and there was scarcely a soldier the length and breadth of the World War fronts who did not know that plane as the Red Falcon's.

Now as they roared from their secret field atop the flat surface of Saar Mountain in the Vosges, Sika's voice came through the speaking tube.

"Master, you know where we get fuel and ammunition tonight?"

"Not yet, big boy," Rand shot back. "We'll get to that after we are over the German lines."

"But, Master, the gauge say empty already."

"That means we have enough gas for ten minutes," Rand said.

He threw back his head and bellowed forth in his favorite song, his feet tapping the rudder bar in time to the raggy tune.

"I'll be down to get you in a taxi, honey. Better be ready 'bout half past eight. . . ."

"Master," Sika's voice came through with a pleading note, "why you always do dangerous work? Why not yon shoot sometimes and let Sika do dangerous fighting?"

"And let you have all the fun?" the Red Falcon chuckled. "Think I'm crazy?"

"Always you joke, Master."

"Why not?" Rand laughed. "I got a theory, big boy. When I laugh I can check that to my credit and no matter what happens from then on, I have had that laugh and no one can take it away from me."

He threw back his head in a roar of laughter.

"Master!"

The laughter of the Red Falcon was cut off short. Except for the churning of the Liberty engine, there was silence.

Two pairs of eyes stared through the darkness at a brilliant crimson light far ahead and high in the sky over German territory.

THE Red Falcon knew that this could be no planet. It was something new to him and it smacked of danger and adventure, challenging him to test his skill, his nerves and his fighting ability.

Automatically, the Red Falcon shifted the direction of his plane, heading it straight for that red light in the sky.

Neither spoke for a while; then Barry Rand cracked, "That looks like something which needs investigation. Are you game, Sika?"

"We get in fight, Master?" There was a vibrant feeling in the giant's deep voice, for no one in the world loved a fight better than Sika, chief of the Wampana.

"Never can tell about that," Rand said. "But we usually don't end up at some tea party"

"You not forget the gasoline, Master?"

"How can I with that word 'empty' staring me in the face?" Rand said. "I figure we've got enough to get to the red light."

"And after that, Master?"

"You worry too much, big boy."

Rand drew back on the throttle a little to get the most out of the little gasoline left. He knew well the fate that lay before them if they went down inside of Germany. They've had forced landings before, but luck was always with them. However, some day it might run out on them but that was something he would never admit to Sika or anyone.

Barry Rand was trying to fathom the mystery of the light, studying it with his keen eyes. As yet he was too far away to make a guess—a beacon perhaps by which German planes could chart their positions in the night. He'd heard of such a thing on the sea, and the same stunt might be used over land.

Then he thought of another angle which Sika, at the moment, put into words when he said, "Master, maybe it be a trap for you."

Rand laughed. "You flatter us," he said.

"You joke always," Sika moaned. "You do not realize how far Germans would go to capture you."

But the red light looked more and more like some kind of a lure to draw them or some other night pilots. There was something intensely fascinating about it. It was large in size, so that it could be seen even far back of the American front. The light would surely draw Allied planes, if for no other reason than to satisfy their curiosity.

Suddenly a flash appeared in the sky, like the exploding of a gasoline tank and, in the light of the flash, a plane seemed to be falling apart. Rand could see the section of a wing of a Nieuport go down.

Then it was dark again except for that dim glow. One thing baffled Barry. The crimson glow shed no illumination. It was visible from a distance but yet gave no light to see by.

Rand swung farther north. He was close enough now to see that it was suspended by some object above.

"What happen to that plane which explode, Master?"

"That was a Nieuport. It struck something in the air before it got to the red light."

"Then we strike one any time, Master?"

"I'm not sure. I had a hunch something like that might be in the air. That's why I decided to come around behind it. We haven't hit it yet—"

Those words were barely out of his mouth when the Liberty coughed and died.

Rand sat rigid. He stared about in the darkness for some landing place. He didn't want to drop a flare. That would show the Germans where he was landing, but the red light in the sky had caused his eyes to become temporarily blinded to the darkness about him.

He turned directly away from the light and began gliding down.

"Dump out a flare, big boy," Rand said calmly.

"But Master—"

"Dump it out," Rand insisted. "I know the Heinies will see where we go down, but we can't help that. You wanted a fight, didn't you?"

"Yes, Master."

"Well, you're going to get it!"

THE flare plopped open, lighting up the world that was directly beneath them.

Rand could see a field large enough to land the Red Falcon plane at the edge of a blacked-out town. He nosed down for the spot and cut the switch and throttle from force of habit.

As the flare settled on its little parachute, Rand switched his eyes from the field to the running masses of German troops pouring out of the town. He saw trucks and cars start up in various streets of the town.

"This is going to be a good fight, Master," the giant black cried, as he swung his twin Lewis machine guns on their Scaarf mountings. Rand brought the crimson plane gliding into the field and heard a voice above the sound of the wind that sang a dirge through the bracing wires.

"The Red Falcon!" The exclamation came harshly in German.

The Lewis guns at the back cockpit

bucked and chattered and the German sprawled where he had been running.

"Nice shooting," Rand called to Sika.

"Sika low on bullets," the giant black reminded him.

"I've been thinking of that," Rand admitted. "Maybe—"

Sika interrupted, pointing behind them at the two roads that ran to the south, one a paved highway and the other a parallel country lane on which a steady stream of cars were moving.

"I've been thinking," Rand said calmly, "it might be well to surrender without a fight, Sika. What do you think?"

"Sika not know," said the giant black. "Sika like to fight." There was bitter disappointment in his voice.

"We're surrounded, big boy," Rand said. "We haven't a chance to pull out without gas. They'll have us covered in a few moments."

"Sika kill those Germans with Lewis guns. Only a dozen, Master."

"But there are hundreds of them on all sides," Rand reminded him.

"Sika not afraid to die," the giant black said.

"Neither am I, if it will do any good," said Rand, "but we've got work to do in this war and we won't be any good six feet under."

"Master, you know best," Sika replied. "What I do?"

"They've got a machine gun set up at the east side of the field. "Face that way and hold up your hands while I bring her in."

"Yes, Master." Sika's voice was choked with disappointment.

A burst of machine-gun fire and glowing tracers flashed before the nose of the Red Falcon plane as Rand brought it in. He turned in his seat and looked at Sika. The giant black was standing as ordered, great arms held high over his head.

The sputter of machine-gun fire stopped short. A half-dozen Germans with drawn Lugers came running from the thicket at the edge of the field and raced towards them.

Barry Rand could see the fright and uncertainty on the faces of the Germans. They bore flashlights.

"Hande Hoch!" A German sergeant barked.

They climbed from the cockpit and with the mass of Germans growing thicker, they were marched across the field to a waiting truck with armed guards. The truck then moved toward the town, the other cars falling in behind.

"THIS look very bad," Sika said in a low voice. "Think they kill us, anyway?"

Rand shrugged as one of the German guards, a big fellow with an ugly, red face, shoved a flashlight at Rand's face and demanded, "What goes on here? What is he saying?"

"Nothing that you shouldn't hear," Rand told him. "He was saying that we were captured for good and that this time there was no chance for escape."

"That is good. You will save yourself an earlier death by not trying to make trouble."

The truck began climbing a hill at the west side of the town. The road circled around the hill as it climbed and then, at the top, the truck stopped. They were ordered out of the truck before an old castle of some German barony. The interior was much as one might expect—old furniture, great vaulted ceilings and heavy timbers.

In the second room beyond the reception hall, a German major waited for them. He was a pompous fellow, short, thick-set, with a mustache that was turned up at the ends in Kaiser fashion, his hair cropped close.

"So," he said, "we caught *you* in our trap. You are known as the Red Falcon, *nicht wahr?*"

He glanced from Sika to the waiting Barry Rand.

"You seem to be good at guessing games," Rand said. "Can you guess how we happened to be caught in your trap, as you call it?"

A lieutenant stepped up and saluted. *"Bitte, Herr Major,"* he said with a click of his heels. "These two were not exactly caught in the trap. They simply came down and landed inside our lines."

Rand nodded and smiled at the perplexed look on the major's face. "You see, we just dropped in for a call."

"Enough of this nonsense," the major barked. "You are our prisoners, no mat-

ter how you got here. You were caught like the American predicted. A friend of yours, I believe."

Rand looked puzzled. "A friend of mine—predicted—"

The major nodded and got up. He motioned to the guards who stood behind Barry Rand and Sika.

"Take them!" he ordered.

The Red Falcon and his giant black aide, followed by the guards with bayonets, marched down a hallway, descended a broad stairway and then were led through another corridor.

The major came to a halt and jerked his head toward a heavy oak door.

"This is the chamber," he barked. "Put them in there."

One of the guards stepped forward and unlocked the door.

Barry Rand felt a sharp twinge in his back and lunged forward and away from it instinctively. The charge sent him through the door and into the dark dungeon chamber.

Sika came after him and the major's arrogant voice snapped, "You may as well spend the rest of the night together. You three will be shot at dawn as spies."

The door boomed shut and the great key rasped in the lock.

BARRY RAND had seen no one else inside the dungeon cell. Yet, the major had said that all three would be shot. He glanced about the dark interior of the chamber. There was only a tiny beam of light filtering through the keyhole and another along the crack of the door.

Sika's voice broke the silence. "Master, another man over here chained to wall."

Then a voice from the corner behind Rand called out softly, "Barry, is that you?"

The Red Falcon turned to the direction of the voice.

"Who are you?"

"I think you'll remember me," the voice said weakly. "Remember Johnny Davis in your old outfit?"

"Johnny!" Rand was fumbling in the dark. His hands touched a silky fabric and instinctively drew back.

"Hey, what goes on here?"

"They've got me hung up to dry," Johnny Davis' voice came to him. "Get me down and I'll tell you all about it."

"Sure," Rand said. "Give me a hand, Sika. But these silks, Johnny, what's the idea?"

"That's just my red silk pajamas. Remember?"

Rand whistled low in the dark. "I always told you those red silk pajamas would get you in trouble some time."

The Red Falcon turned to his giant aide. "Johnny, here, was a friend of mine back in our old outfit. He had a passion for silk pajamas—red ones—and when he was late for patrol he'd hurry out of bed and pull on his flying suit over the pajamas."

Turning to the young man trussed up on the wall, he asked, "That's what happened this time?"

"Yeah," Johnny said in disgust, "and now the Heinies are going to shoot me as a spy because they claim I was wearing a disguise and not my regular uniform."

Rand chuckled low. "They call those red pajamas of yours a disguise. Why, it's a wonder I didn't spot it in the dark."

With Sika's help, Rand had the chains loosened and Johnny Davis was standing beside them on the stone floor of the dungeon.

The whole place was chilly and musty smelling. Johnny was shivering in his silk pajamas and Barry Rand offered his coat.

"Thanks, pal," said Johnny. "Boy, am I glad to see you! I was scared to death that I'd killed you."

"How is that, Johnny? How could you kill us from this tomb?"

Johnny Davis hobbled as he moved now. "Let me sit down."

"Sure. Pull up a chair," Rand said.

"Same old Barry," said Johnny. "There aren't any chairs in this subway but there's a pile of straw over in the corner."

He limped as he made his way over, with Barry Rand holding his arm to aid his movements.

"WHY aren't you in a hospital?" Rand demanded after they sat down.

"I guess I didn't make reservations with the Heinie nurses," Johnny said. "Anyway, a slug just nicked my leg. They

bandaged it up before they put me in here.

"I was shot down this morning. They had me in a room under guard for a long time. Sometimes I could hear what they said and sometimes I couldn't."

"Yeah, but how did you almost kill us?" Rand asked.

"I'm getting to that," Johnny went on. "I heard them talking about a light they were going to try out tonight. I couldn't hear all the things they said, but from what I judged, they hoped to attract some of our planes into or near the light. It wasn't until I'd suggested trapping you that I found out they had wires in the air to catch our planes.

"Well, they began talking about something else. There's a big drive on by our boys tomorrow morning at dawn. The worst part of it is that the Germans know this and are ready for the drive. Do you know where that queer mountain is in the Arras sector? They call it Hill 63. That's a laugh."

"I know it very well," Rand said. "It's what they call a mesa out West, meaning a table. It goes straight up for about three hundred feet and you can't climb the thing or the Heinies would have had gun placements on it long ago."

"Could you and Sika land on that flat top with a load of time bombs?" asked Johnny.

Barry Rand thought awhile; then he said, "Yes, if the job were urgent enough."

"It is," Davis said. "In fact, the only hold-up that the Germans fear is that you would be free to land there and plant some bombs. From what I heard there are deep cracks along the west cliff at the top. If some time bombs were dropped down those cracks, it would blow up that whole side of the cliff."

Rand shrugged. "It would be a cute job, but what's to be gained?"

"You'd kill thousands of German troops," Johnny whispered. "Isn't that enough? You were always a hog about killing Germans."

"For a forced landing job before breakfast it might do," Rand grinned.

"Then you'll do it?"

The Phantom of the Black Cross was a friend of all the Allies save one—the brother he had sworn to kill!

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"Got a ticket out of here?" Rand asked.

"You mean you can't get out? Why, all the guys back at the outfit had you two figured as being able to get out of anything."

"Thanks," Rand said drily, "but listen. What are those Heinies doing under the cliff and how do you know?"

"I heard the German command talking about it and hoping you wouldn't get the idea to come over and blast them. Those German troops are hiding under the cliff until our drive starts at dawn. Then they'll make a surprise counterattack and break up our whole show."

"So—" Rand still didn't understand.

"When they let me talk," Johnny burried on. "I told them they might trap you with the light. I said I hated you because you were a traitor. You see, I had to pretend I wanted to see you caught."

"And you did," Rand grinned, "but not for what they thought?"

"Certainly not," Johnny exploded. "You know I'm for you one hundred percent."

"I always figured that. Thanks, Johnny."

"Don't mention it, sweetheart. I had to get you here so I could give you the dope. Can you do it, Barry?"

Rand chuckled. "So the gang thinks Sika and I are a couple of magicians."

"Sure. You can't let us down now. If that German counterattack is a success, they may even take over the old field."

Barry Rand nudged his giant black aide. "Go around to the left, Sika, and see if you can find a way out of here."

"Yes, Master."

Rand started around the other way. Johnny got up from the straw pile and followed Rand. "I know where the gasoline stores are if you need gas."

"No kidding?"

"Saw that from the air," Johnny said, "before they shot me down."

"Good boy. If we land you back at the home base, do you think you could talk the C.O. out of some time bombs for us?"

"I'd sure try, but you might get some bombs here."

"We'll get you back," Rand said. "I don't like that leg of yours. Anyway, what's the use of leaving you here for a Heinie firing squad?"

"Yeah," Johnny said drily. "Sure would be too bad to let the Heinies waste bullets on me like that."

FROM the other side of the dungeon cell came a very faint clanging sound, as of metal striking against rock. Rand froze there.

"What's that?"

"Me, Master," Sika's voice hissed.

Rand held Davis by the arm and moved across the dungeon floor. Sika loomed in the darkness before him. He was bending down, scraping with something.

"Find place where mortar is loose between stones, Master," Sika said. "One stone out of wall already, but guard outside."

Barry felt the hole in the wall that Sika was noiselessly making. The Wampana chief was working with an iron bar he had torn out of the stone wall.

The hole grew larger and now Rand was helping, too. A ray of light slanted in through cracks in the rocks.

The Red Falcon whispered to his aide, "Doesn't that guard know we're breaking through?"

"Not yet, Master. Sika fix him."

The faithful black worked on; then, when the hole was large enough to let his great shoulders pass, he reached a hand out and drew it back. Something moved outside.

By the light that came in through the hole Barry and Johnny could see everything quite clearly. Sika bent down and crawled through the opening he had made in the wall. There was a thud outside and the sound of a voice.

With a sudden backward lunge, he yanked a struggling form inside through the opening. His hands somehow found the guard's throat, and before he could cry out Sika choked him.

Then, cautiously, Sika crawled through the opening into the corridor. He turned and peered in. "You come now, Master."

Barry Rand pushed Johnny Davis ahead of him and then followed through a moment later.

They tried several doors on their way back to the stairs. The first and the second doors were locked, but the third was easily opened. It proved to be a storeroom. Cases of food were piled on shelves.

They moved across the room to a low, narrow, cellar window which proved to be unlocked.

Rand was first to crawl through, this time, with Sika helping Davis. Then they pulled the great giant's form through the small opening.

They trailed off into the night, following the lead of the giant black. Once away from the castle grounds, Sika hoisted Johnny Davis on his back and under Davis' direction, they circled the town and made for the storage depot.

Daylight was not so far away and there was no time to be wasted. The supply depot was heavily guarded and they approached slowly by crawling on their hands and knees. As they came closer, Rand turned to Johnny Davis. "You stay here, Johnny, Sika and I will handle the job from here on. We'll pick you up on the way back."

Rand and Sika had not gone more than perhaps a hundred feet when a low voice behind them suddenly commanded, "Halt, or you will be dead!"

Rand stopped short; cold sweat broke out on his forehead. One small move and he could hurl the guard to the ground, but that was a big chance for the German had a gun.

Sika was a little too far away to act quickly enough. A light flashed and went out.

"Get up and march ahead of me!" The guard's voice was still low.

In the next flash of the electric torch, Rand saw the guard raise the whistle to his lips but suddenly there was a rustle behind them, a swift move and then a low thud. The guard pitched over in the darkness and landed half across Rand's legs.

"Did I get him?" asked Johnny in a low, breathless voice.

THEY moved on together now, all three. Two more guards went down, one before Sika and one by a surprise, neck-breaking attack by the Red Falcon himself.

They finally reached the supply depot. There were drums of gasoline and plenty of dynamite.

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Rand and Sika came out loaded. Johnny Davis tried to carry some of the supplies, but Rand told him he would do well enough to get himself to the Red Falcon plane.

A lone German soldier guarded the plane where it had been landed. The gray of dawn was appearing in the eastern sky. The giant black moved like a great cat stalking his prey; then the swift attack, the snap of the back and they were free to load the Red Falcon plane.

Quickly they stored the supplies in the ample rear cockpit. With gasoline sucked into the cylinders of the Liberty, she barked off and was in the air in less than two minutes, racing against time through the early morning mists toward that table mountain known to the Allies as Hill 63.

Barry Rand spoke through the tube now.

"There won't be enough time to land and plant that stuff," he said. "If we do, those German troops will move right out from under the cliff."

"But you can't hit those cracks in the rocks with dynamite any other way," Davis argued. "You've got to land!"

A slow grin spread over the Red Falcon's face.

"Watch Sika. Help him get the fuse and the caps and the dynamite ready."

By now it was light enough for them to see Hill 63 through the morning mist. The Red Falcon aimed for it with the throttle wide open.

"Get your eyes peeled, Sika," Rand barked through the tube.

"Sika ready, Master!"

"Okay. See the cracks in the rock where the dynamite must drop! I'll fly so you can drop it over the right side, Sika."

Johnny Davis' tense voice yelled through the tube, "Fokkers coming down off that cloud to the left."

"Take care of them, Johnny," Rand ordered. "That's your job now. Sika's going to be busy with the jelly rolls."

He held the Red Falcon plane steady as he came in over the cliff. A burst of wild Spandau lead came crashing down and ripped through the right wing. Another burst sounded and the fabric near the tail of the fuselage looked like a sieve.

"Hold, Master. Sika ready."

The giant black bent over the side and let go with the explosive.

Rand got a glimpse of the Germans trying to run out from under the cliff. With a roar, the side of the cliff tore itself apart from the rest of Hill 63, crumbling as it fell. Masses of Germans ran like trapped rats, but there was no chance of any of them escaping. In less than a minute, there was nothing but fallen rock.

More Spandau slugs came at them. The Red Falcon plane was shivering from the rattling Lewis guns. Johnny Davis let out a yell, "I got that one."

The Red Falcon whirled in his seat and looked back. One Fokker was going down in flames and three others were trying to catch them in their cross-fire. He wanted to turn back and fight them all but instead, he pushed on the throttle and the Liberty engine screamed out in a burst of speed.

"Hey, I want another shot at those so-and-so's," Davis yelled.

"We're taking you back to the base hospital," replied Barry.

The Red Falcon didn't zoom his plane over the old home field before landing. He slipped in from a long glide at the far end of the field.

Johnny Davis lingered.

"Think nothing of it, Johnny," Rand said. "Be seeing you."

"But wait," Johnny pleaded. "Here's our new C.O. coming on the double."

"Tell him some other time," Rand said.

They could hear the voice of the running captain calling to them. There seemed nothing but friendly greeting in his manner, but the Red Falcon waved his hand again and gunned the giant Liberty engine.

As they roared back to the Vosges Mountains and their hideout on Saar Mountain, Sika asked, "Master, what you think new captain want?"

"Maybe he wants us to come back in the old outfit," Rand ventured. "Think we should, big boy?"

After a long pause, the giant black chief replied, "Sika think we do all right—like we are, Master."

"You and me both," the Red Falcon grinned, and laying his head back, he gave voice to his favorite song, *The Darktown Strutter's Ball.*

THIRTY-MINUTE ACE



THERE WASN'T TIME TO THINK. . . .

CHUCK MEISTER was feeling as perky as a bull pup on his first daring excursion away from his mother.

The world about him—blue sky, white clouds and five Spads in V-formation above shell-blasted earth—was his very own and elegant oyster.

Besides all this, a nice moon with a smiling sun shining overhead and three enemy planes that they were about to attack—Chuck's fingers itched and he wanted to scratch them on the triggers of his twin Vickers guns.

They were diving to meet the attack of those three Fokkers right now and as their Hissos screamed and the wind shricked through the rigging of their slips Chuck saw his flight leader turn and shoot him a glance through his goggles.

Chuck laughed. Ken Allen was warning him about the coming fight—warning him to follow the orders received just before takeoff. He was to dive in, get

You can't tell a guy who knows better that he isn't an ace on his first flight—you've got to write it out for him with indelible death in flame-filled skies!

one clean hurst at a German plane and then break out of the fight and run for home. His first taste of blood was to be a safe one. Ken Allen had a reputation for bringing up his fledglings very carefully. "On the Bottle Allen," he was known as around the flying fields; a nursemaid to fledglings on their first flights over the lines. But he hadn't lost a first-flight man yet.

But Chuck was dreaming of what Mary would think and feel when she heard that he had gotten his first enemy plane—shot it down in flames. Maybe two of those Fokkers out ahead would be his!

It was a thrilling thing to sit in your cockpit and see the glistening wings of your new Spad extending on either side of you. Chuck thought, "This is the nuts, but definitely," and laughed at the back of Ken Allen's head before him. Tben he looked across the short space that separated him from Johnny Willis, flying middle span across from him in the formation. Johnny Willis, another new man in the flight, looked scared. That was wrong—this was going to be duck soup. He winked at Willis.

Take a crack at one enemy plane and run for it, even if you didn't hit it? That was silly. After all, he wasn't just *any* new replacement flying the front for the first time. He had turned in the best record at elementary flying school, and then at advanced it had been the same. He'd had an almost perfect score in gunnery. He could hit anything. He was sure of himself.

Almost within range now, the Fokkers had seen the five Spads tearing in and were climbing for higher advantage. The five Spads began climbing as well.

Chuck sat hunched forward, finger poised on the triggers. Everytbing was set. He already had his first kill in his sights. This was going to be a cinch. But that running home business—that was a laugh. He'd chase these babies until he got them. . . .

His thoughts were interrupted by the chatter of machine-gun fire. A Fokker to the right had pulled a flasbing Immelmann and was coming back, blasting at Johnny Willis. Chuck could hear Johnny's guns chatter in a wild burst. He didn't have time to turn for a look. He still had his ship in his sights. He pressed the trigger.

He was a split second too late. The Fokker before him was wriggling out before he could make his guns fire. The tracers whipped out and punched little holes through blue sky.

Chuck was angry suddenly and sent the Spad screaming to the attack. He took a special dislike to that enemy plane. It turned, ducked, Immelmanned out of trouble again and turning again, ran for it.

THERE was something about the way that German plane fled before his guns that sent the blood pounding through his veins. He was thrilled, on edge—like a dog that has a cat on the run.

They tore off into Germany, Chuck Meister's Spad after the fleeing German Fokker. Chuck leaned forward eagerly, like a bungry child at a bakery—as if leaning forward would get him closer to the fleeing German.

Just a little closer and he could send his bullets home. The Fokker was a slim, darting shape in his sights. A little closer and his slugs would reach the other, and he'd score his first kill. The lust of the chase gripped him—a pleasant sensation.

But somehow that Fokker didn't come closer to him. In fact, Chuck thought for a while that it was getting farther and farther away, although the race was close. The Heinie just seemed to keep out of his reach and kept running.

He remembered the orders that Allen had given him—he sure wasn't on his way home now! His lips drew back in a grin. He was riding hell-bent deeper into Germany. But that didn't matter—be had plenty of gas and bullets, and be was after this guy.

He was gaining. He pressed his triggers and saw the tracers die away nearer the tail of that fleeing Fokker than before. Another one, two, three minutes and he'd have the range. . . .

He pushed on the throttle for more speed and noted that she was already wide open. The Jerry looked behind at him and altbough the distance was great Chuck tbought the Jerry looked scared.

Suddenly, the Fokker flipped up in a steep climb. This was his chance. Chuck pressed his triggers again and watched

his tracers whipping out toward the climbing path the Fokker was taking. Then the Fokker finished his half loop, rolled and came tearing back to give battle.

Chuck was no fool. He was ready. He'd climbed with the Jerry's roll. He was up on a par with the other and the Spad was soupy. He cut in with a burst and missed. Too bad. Better luck next time—and the Jerry got a blast at him!

For once, Chuck was startled. Not scared, he told himself—just startled. The slugs slashed in front of him, crashed into and through his instrument panel. No time to take stock now. Something might be hit, but the oil wasn't squirting. That was what he worried about. If the oil line got cut, then the old Hisso wouldn't hold out for long. But the oil was right up there. He risked a split second to glance at the gauge. The needle was right.

He was thrashing his controls about inside the ship—but he got away. He had a feeling that his flying was a little rough compared to the flying of this Jerry, and then he got a shot—the Jerry crossed his sights or his sights caught the Jerry. There wasn't time to think. Chuck pressed his triggers.

Tracers lashed out again and he saw them stab into the cockpit of the Fokker. He saw the pilot jerk erect in his seat and saw his head snap back. . . .

That was all he had time to see. Then he felt a little sorry for the guy because he knew now how scared the other must suddenly have become. Chuck had been just a little scared himself when his instrument board shattered.

And then the air was suddenly filled with Fokkers, and he got to be busy. After a while he realized that there were only three of them—but, battle-trained aces, they seemed a lot more.

For the first time since he'd started on this flight he thought of the well-known maneuver of *getting the heck out of there* and tried to put it into execution.

BULLETS pounded on his wings and his fuselage covering and his nice, shiny Spad began to look like an old battered colander.

He was suddenly frightened. These birds knew their business—and his. But somehow, when he caught another Fokker in his sights he managed to send a flock of little steel-coated pills to the pilot's ribs and that Fokker, too, dived into the place where bad Fokkers go.

Then things proceeded to get very hot and the white cloud dead ahead looked as welcome as a feather bed to a worker just off a double shift. Chuck went diving into the cloud and pulled it shut behind him.

When he ducked out again, the sky was clear of planes and the country below him looked as strange as Siam to a New Englander.

He looked at his gas gauge and what he saw was not reassuring when he checked with his wrist watch. The tank was less than half full, and he'd only been out about twenty minutes. It didn't make sense. Then he smelled gasoline vapor and that didn't help. A Spandau slug must have nicked his tank.

There is always a very good chance that leaking gasoline will catch fire and burn in a very hot manner—but he'd barely got a good grip on that idea when he smelled something else. He didn't identify the second smell until he glanced at his compass and saw that a Jerry bullet had shattered the glass and that the alcohol had leaked out.

The compass was useless.

To get home now would be a good trick if he could do it, but he didn't have the faintest notion of how to start. He knew he'd chased the Heinie back into Germany. He was sure of that from little checks he'd made on compass on the way out. Now he was well into Germany. . . He could take his direction from the sun!

He looked for the sun and found it directly over his head. It blazed down, not smiling warmly, but laughing out loud.

He began to think about Mary. He didn't know why at first—and then he realized it was because he'd miss her pretty terribly if he died—and then he had to laugh at the notion. It was she who'd miss him—he wouldn't be wanting anything. The thought became an ache. That was the worst about dying—not to want anything, ever again.

He pulled himself together. There were other reasons for his thinking of Mary right now. Without intending to, she'd

helped him while away many of the dull hours in navigation—he'd spent them writing letters to her. He could use some of the study he'd missed now.

All he knew about navigation was that you could tell east from west by looking at a compass—or the sun by day and the stars at night. And if clouds hid them, why, you just climbed above the clouds and got your bearings.

Of course with him it had been different. He never forgot a face, nor did he ever forget a landmark. He could remember the territory he had flown over—always remember that. Church steeples and towns and patches of woods with certain shapes. It hadn't occurred to him that there might not be time to look.

So he'd spent his time in navigation classes writing to Mary—well, that hadn't exactly been wasted time, either. For no accountable reason he began to feel better.

"Well, call me sure-shot Charlie," he said sourly. "I never thought a guy could get so snarled up."

Vainly, he searched the sky about him. There was not the slightest sign of planes, enemy or Allied. The only sign of life was a hawk that circled down below over a little tumbled-down barn and a stone house that was half hidden by trees. Not even any archie guns to tell him for sure that he was over German territory.

BUT he had to be over German territory. That was a cinch. He'd chased that Heinie all the way back beyond the lines before he had shot him down.

That was another thing that had him sore. He'd shot down two enemy planes and there wouldn't be anyone within ten miles of the place who could give him verification. That, perhaps, was the biggest heartbreak of all, now that he thought of it.

On the other hand, being lost was no picnic. He could double that if he didn't manage to do something about it pretty soon.

He looked at his gas gauge and saw the needle sinking farther. The tank was only a quarter full. The gas wasn't going into the engine; it was running out of some Spandau rathole faster than it was going through the Hisso—and that was bad.

Again he thought about fire and his insides fluttered. He'd have to make up his mind right now, and take a gamble on sheer luck. He could circle and take a point. He could spit in his palm and slap it with his finger and go whichever way the most spit flew.

Maybe that would be best. He made another check and froze. Off on the horizon, he saw three specks. He'd been very good at silhouettes. He recognized them as three Hanover German bombers. They were heading away to his right.

Frantically, he went after them. At least they were planes—and if they didn't do anything for him, he could try to shoot them down. But there was another angle. The German planes were going somewhere. They were bombers and either they were going to bomb or they were coming back from a swift daylight raid. To be sure, these Hanoveraners were a two-place job that could do bombing or observation work, but usually only one plane was sent out on reconnaisance.

No, this was definite. His job would be to find out if they were going or coming. He didn't know that much about himself—but those Hanoveraners on the horizon, they knew where they were going and why.

He had less than an eighth of a tank of gasoline now. He seemed to be losing fuel faster than before. Perhaps a seam had been opened by the vibration.

One thing Chuck noticed. He was gaining very swiftly on the bombers, and pretty soon he'd have to make up his mind whether to attack immediately, or hang around trying to find out where they were going.

Suddenly his eye caught a sparkle as a shaft of sunlight beat down into his cockpit and he looked down. There was the leak, at a rear corner of the gasoline tank—and he was chewing gum. He took the wad of gum from his mouth and tried to fix the break. The stream slowed for a moment but came seeping out after a few seconds.

He got out his handkerchief and pocket knife, and used the knife blade to calk the hole with fabric. The stream slowed to a drip.

When he lifted his head above the cowling again, he was amazingly close to the three bombers. That might mean they

were heavily loaded—and then he saw the bombs in their racks under the wings.

He wanted to shout—and the next moment did just that. They were going out, heading for an Allied objective—he gunned his ship toward them, and then archie was grunting up at him and the sky was filled with dirty yellow mushrooms.

But that didn't matter, because there were the front lines. He even recognized the location, as he sent the Spad in a wild zigzag course to escape the bursts. He could see the bombardiers in the rear cockpits of the Hanoveraners getting ready to fight off his coming attack.

The Hisso engine on the Spad snorted and gasped. It caught and ran again. The gas gauge was almost at empty. Then he was flashing over his own lines, half flying, half gliding with the Hisso coughing and spitting.

No place to sit down, even though he was on his own side of the lines now. Everything on the ground was blasted. Then he saw a strip of open field below.

He could set the Spad down in that field with comfort, and it would have been elegant to step out on solid earth on his own side of the lines. But there were those three bombers.

FOR the first time since he joined up, Chuck permitted duty to rear its rather unattractive head. He knew there wouldn't be any chance for confirmation on these three bombers. He knew there would be hell to pay if and when he got back to his drome. He'd disobeyed orders and got himself into the devil's own mess. He had one chance to save his ship—that inviting field lay just under him now and the bombers were far enough away so he'd be out of gliding distance of the field if he attacked.

With a surging roar the Hisso seemed to pick up in a last burst of speed as he sent the ship charging into the fire of the tail guns of the bombers. His Vickers guns began spitting fire. He had a good record as a shot. He hadn't been asleep in gunnery class.

He blasted at one bomber until it turned off and veered crazily—then went after another. The second ship burst into flames, just as the Hisso gave a final gasp and died. He had time, before he went into a spin, to see the one remaining Hanoveraner turn and head for home.

He managed to bring the Spad out of its spin and for the first time realized that his right leg wouldn't work against the rudder. It was numb and out of control. He brought the Spad in as well as he could. He didn't have much of a chance. Just as he went to set her down, the second Hanoveraner dug her nose into the ground nearby and blazed fiercely. As if to keep it company, Chuck washed out his landing gear against a rock that the grass of the field had hidden and his Spad rolled over.

Chuck came awake slowly enough to realize even before he opened his eyes that he was in a hospital. Then he saw Ken Allen, his leader, looking down at him. Tommy Porter was standing beside Allen.

Well, go ahead. Dish out the sermon, and make it good because I need it and I can take it, he wanted to say, but didn't. Something held him back, and then Ken Allen began to speak.

Ken said a lot of things, including the news that one surviving German pilot had admitted they were coming to bomb Chuck's new drome. He also said that those first two Fokkers Chuck had shot down were verified by Tommy Porter, and Tom nodded agreement.

And it seemed that the two bombers were credited to him, too. The crew of a well camouflaged anti-aircraft post behind Yank lines had seen all of it, and reported.

"You'll get medals for this," Allen said. "For a replacement, you're not doing bad, barring not following orders at the start. But we'll forget that. Is there anything we can get for you while you're knitting yourself a new leg?"

"If you don't mind," Chuck said penitently, "I'd like a few sheets of writing paper, just a few, and as many books on navigation as you can dig up."

Porter and Allen looked at him strangely and nodded. As they went down the corridor, Chuck heard them say;

"I had that guy all wrong. Thought he was a wise guy."

"He's nuts. An ace in half an hour and he kills time studying stuff like navigation."

(Continued from page 6)

A Boy's Book of Model Airplanes, by F. A. Collins. Appleton-Century Co. New York.

Aeronautical Occupations for Boys, by Burr W. Leyson. E. P. Dutton & Co. New York.

Aeronautic Radio, by Lt. Myron F. Eddy. Ronald Press, 15 E. 26th St. New York.

Aircraft Blueprint Reading, by H. V. Almen, B. Sc., and R. K. Mead. Pittman Pub. Co., 2 W. 45th St. New York.

Aircraft Drafting Room Manual, by Jas. G. Thompson. Aviation Press, 500 Market St., San Francisco, Calif. $3.50

Aircraft Engine Maintenance, by D. J. Brimm, Jr. and N. Edward Boggess. Pittman Pub. Co., New York. $2.50

Aircraft Modelers' Guide, by H. Leigh. John Hamilton, Ltd., London. $1.15

Book of Gliders by E. W. Teale. Dutton Publishers, New York.

Building and Flying Model Airplanes: Air Youth Handbook National Aeronautic Assn., Washington, D. C. $2.00

Scale Model Aircraft, by J. H. Stevens. John Hamilton, Ltd., London. $1.50

Now from Ray Ohman, 1406 N. Wells St., Chicago, Ill.

Dear G-8:

First of all, let me congratulate you on your swell magazine. I've read G-8 since I first was able to read. In my opinion, don't you think there was a shortage of German mechanics in the last war? Every time G-8 escapes from Germany, some poor greaseball seems to get slugged by G-8.

Don't you think, G-8, that you ought to ease up on those mechanics?

Please excuse this outburst of personal opinion but I had to know how the G-8 readers feel about this. We ought to get up a society called the SAVE THE HEINIE MECHANICS FROM HORRIBLE DEATH BY G-8 SOCIETY.

Keep on with those swell stories. I enjoy them greatly.

Yours for Victory
Ray Ohman.

Well, Ray, I suppose I should have a very guilty conscience about slugging all those German mechanics. But to tell the truth I had a co-murderer in those little killing spells.

You see, while Bob Hogan bases his stories on that old diary I used to keep during World War One, he has a very wild imagination and when he lets it go, he makes me quite a fellow. So when I murder a German mechanic, at times, just remember that sometimes Hogan is there holding the guy's arms while I slug him. But just so we knock off the Heinies, eh Ray?

And now we have a chapter formed at State College, Pa. Listen to this.

Dear G-8:

A bunch of us fellows got your magazine and decided to join your club. Here are our blanks.

I will be G-8 for our gang, so send our charter to me.

Yours till my last sideslip.
Billy Gotherman,
TKE House
State College, Pa.

Welcome, fellows, to the fold of the G-8 club. And remember this extra study that we always mention to new club members, namely the wireless code. Get down to business on that. You have no idea how it will help you in your work. For instance, listen to this from an A.P.O. address.

Dear G-8:

I wish I could impress on your whole gang how very important it is to learn, if possible, the wireless code before you join the armed forces. Because I could send and receive sixteen to eighteen words a minute when I was inducted, I rose to the rank of Tech. Sergeant in about three months less than usual. Perhaps I saved more time than that, I'm not sure. Anyway, I know I'm certainly mighty glad that I learned my code before I went in.

Happy landings to all the gang.
Ernie Smith.

See what I've been shouting all this time, gang?

And here we have another reader and this is what he says:

Dear G-8:

I want to become a member of your club and have inclosed the coupon in this letter. Hope you find it.

I've just finished reading your latest

story and it was fair. Yes, that is all I can say for it. Just fair—if that.

How about more of those fantastic German monster machines of destruction? I think you should keep going on that stuff. It is far-fetched, I know, but G-8, you're pretty far-fetched yourself.

I've just written a letter to Steve Hartigan in Malvern, N. Y. He is trying to organize an International Squadron for Lone Eagles. I'd like to get in it as I'm going to be one myself—I hope.

Well, I'm running out of Vickers slugs, so

Happy landings,
Maurice Laumaillet,
62-55 Booth St.
Elmhurst, N. Y.

So our magazine is fair and you want some monster machines even if they are far-fetched like me, eh Maurice? Well, I've been called a lot of things by people all over the world but this is the first time I've been called far-fetched.

Well, Maurice, we'll have to send your letter on to Bob Hogan and see what he can dream up, with the help of the old diary, in the way of a machine that should be a hum-dinger.

And now we have another one of the gang who is going into uniform. Listen to this:

Dear G-8:

I have just read the last issue of your mag and I think it is swell. I can't remember when I first read your mag but I believe it was back in 1936.

I've tried ever since to get a chapter together but couldn't get enough guys to join. At last I have decided to join as a lone agent. My coupon is enclosed. If possible, I would like to be a lone agent permanently.

I have only one complaint—Battle doesn't have enough to do with the yarn.

Yours till Battle understands American slang.

Elmer Warren, Jr.

PS: I am 17 years old now and expect to join the Navy very soon. E. W.

That last is particularly swell, Elmer. We'll all be mighty proud to have you in our great Navy. More power to you and lots of luck.

And about Battle, we think you'll find that our English friend has quite a big part in the story this issue. He was mighty important in that adventure. If it hadn't

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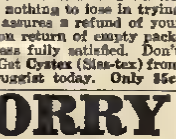
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been for his perfect make-up job, Bull might have been caught, and then . . . But I'll let you read the story for yourselves.

Well, this should cheer you up and make everybody feel good. It's from Leon Decker, of Armoret, Texas.

Dear G-8:

I wanted to thank you first for helping us form a clnh and giving us permission to hava a club with only three memhers. I was glad yon undaretood that the way we live mada it hard to get anybody else. I mean it made it so wa couldn't at all.

Yon see here where wa live, there are only three ranches and thay are very large ones, and except for the cowhands and our fathers, there aren't any other fellows around at all. So there are only us three boys to form a clnh and we want to thank you again for letting us form it just like we had five to start.

Well, I'm G-8, like yon. And it certainly is an honor. I try to run things just like yon would, G-8, hnt of coarse I know I couldn't do a job that well.

We hava a clubhouse all to ourselves. My father let us use an old hunk house that wasn't used for anything now. When we were in town once wa got some sulphur candles and we got all tha smells out of it with the salphur burning, and then we cleaned it np good.

It makes a swell cluhhouse, and wa have a kind of cavalry ontfit, since we don't have bicycles or planes of our own out here. Bnt we can take a pony whenever wa want to—a cow horse, I mean to say. Wa call the smaller ones cow poules. And wa ride in formation when wa ride. I'm at point, and then Charlie and Billy cover the two tips of the triangle. Wa ride like everything and try hold our formation, hot this is very hard with the ponies wa have for when they all get running real fast, they want to race and then Billy's pony which he calls Seven, for he is Bull, his pony runs ahead because he's the fostest of tha lot.

Well, so long, G-8. Happy landings and thanks.

Leon Decker.

And now we have some constructive complaints. This is from Gerald Moore, and let's see what he has to offer.

Dear G-8:

I hava heen reading your books for about three years and well, let ma giva

yon some pointers, if yon don't mind. I have just moved here and don't know any other fellows so I try to content myself with G-8 and this is what is wrong with your mag, I think.

1. Your magazine always has the same story in it over and over again. I mean it is the same plot with different names and things. Why doesn't this guy Hogan, if he is so clever, give us something different sometime?

2. Why don't you show a picture of Battle with his famous rolling-pin?

3. Why don't yon show a detailed picture of the death machine and a closeup of the inhuman devil who is opposing you?

Yours until Bull gets his fill for once.
Gerald Moore,
3415 St. Clair Ave.
Cleveland, Ohio.

Well, Gerald, them is harsh words, some of them. Of course we knew that Bob Hogan's stories followed about the same pattern, the same as a detective book follows about the same pattern or any other type of story for that matter. But we didn't think they were all the same. I'll have to speak to Bob about this and see if he can't work out something "more differenter" for you, Gerald.

About the pictures, I guess you haven't seen all the mags and all the illustrations, because I'm sure that many of the pictures you mention have been in time and again.

Now we have a card from way out west in California I think we should answer these questions so the rest of you will know, too. Here we go.

Dear G-8:

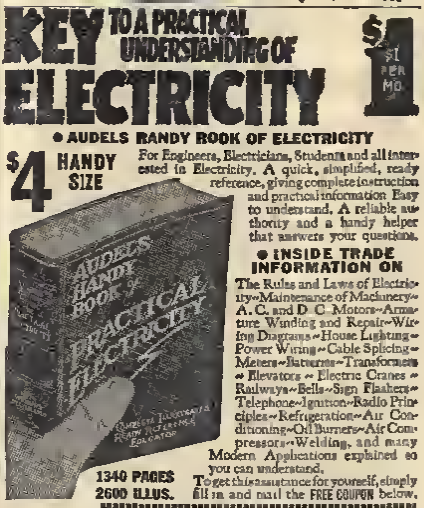
I wonder if I could obtain the first book of your adventures. I believe it is called the "Bat Staffel". I will pay for it if I can get one.

I've enjoyed all of your stories and I think Bob Hogan is a swell author. I would appreciate it if you would send me a list of all the back issues before 1940 and I will take my pick.

Thanks,
Bob Marks,
285 W. Center St.,
Pomona,
California.

I'm sure Bob Hogan will be pleased when he reads what you say about him. I'll make him take a bow facing west when I tell him.





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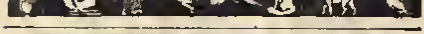


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G-8 and his BATTLE ACES

About those old magazines, Bob, I can't tell you where you can get them. The publisher does not carry any extra old copies and the only thing I can do is refer you to your nearest second-hand book and magazine store. You'll find such stores in every fair-sized city. Try snooping around for some of those second-hand magazine stands next time you get in to Los Angeles.

Here's a letter from one of the new gang members. He lives in Kings Mountain, North Carolina and that is lovely country; I know because I've been there. Address him on Route 2 if you should want to write him.

He says:

Dear G-8:

I have been reading your magazine for about a year and a half and I think it is the best on the market at any price. I wouldn't miss a single issue for anything.

I am 16 years old and a senior in high school. I have always been interested in flying and I read every aviation book that I can get. My hobbies are reading, swimming, skating, bicycling and collecting pictures of airplanes. I have over a thousand pictures of airplanes ranging from the small trainers to the huge B-19.

Some day I hope to pilot a fighter plane in the U.S. Army Air Force and take a crack at Tokyo and Berlin.

Yours,
Homer Pheagin, Jr.

At your age, Homer, it won't be long before you will be flying a plane, will it? But don't set your heart on a combat job. Remember the boys in the bombers are doing a swell job, too. In fact they may win the war for us in large measure. Lots of luck, anyway, Homer.

And now we have some complaints from Ray Bradley. His letter follows.

Dear G-8:

I have been reading your magazine for two years but never got mad enough to write you before. Those stories of you and your Battle Aces are beyond a donht the most fantastically fabulous concoctions that any human brain could imagine.

The other stories in your book should be the features while your dreams should take up the left-over space. Stories like the RED FALCON at least

don't have men disappearing every time you change the page.

PLEASE, I beg of you, have at least one G-8 story that sounds possible, or can't you get away from your imagination? I don't know why I waste time writing you this stuff because I know you won't print it. It might make the other readers think things over and bring them to their senses and then make them stop reading the mag.

Your disgusted but faithful reader,
Ray Bradley
515 W. 178th St.
New York City
N. Y.

Okay, pal, so we all kind of smell up the reading room, do we? Well, now I'll leave this up to the others and see what they think. And you thought we wouldn't dare print such a letter. Why, don't you know that we want all our readers to know how the others feel? Even Joe Hawkins. We even print the letters that Joe writes—and incidentally, Joe, where have you been? Haven't seen you lately. Has some Jap got your tongue or something? How's for a nice crabby letter from you?

And here is another request from a reader out in Coalinga, California.

Dear G-8:

I like your mag very much. It's very exciting but it doesn't have enough dogfights and aerial combat. As you know I am a Lone Agent but I have succeeded in getting two others to join my club. Oh! One more thing. Couldn't you have your stories a bit more bloodier?

G-8, please don't have lady spies in your mag.

Well, I will be signing off for this time.

Betty "Speed" Fondren
205 Houston St.
Coalinga, California

Betty, that makes things tough for me. I wonder how the rest of you guys and gals in the gang like or dislike R-1. Because Bob Hogan had a story coming up soon with her and if there are too many of you who don't want to hear about her, why then we'll have to do something about it.

In real life, though, R-1 was a swell gal. You would have liked her, Betty, I know. She was regular and brave and had lots of what it takes.

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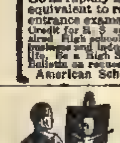
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G-8 and his BATTLE ACES

As for having the stories bloodier, Betty, well you know there are some real quiet, easily shocked people who read our magazine. You wouldn't want to scare them to death, would you?

Gang, here is a nice letter of appreciation that Bob Hogan got from one of the gang. Bob sent it to me and I'm going to pass it on to you.

Dear Mr. Hogan:

I received your letter with my charter and everything. To tell you the honest truth I never expected a letter from you. I was under the impression that when you wrote to a magazine, it was glanced at and tossed in the wastebasket. However I see that I was wrong and wish to express my appreciation of the fact that you took the time to answer me.

I have read *G-8 and his Battle Aces* a long time, in fact it was the first magazine that I ever read. I first started late in 1938 and haven't missed an issue since. Probably the best thing about G-8 is that it is always good. Of course, some stories are better than others, but they are all good. Your magazine first got me interested in aviation which I now follow closely. I also build models and I have several World War I craft.

I was sick with rheumatic fever not long ago—matter of fact, I still am—I am writing this in bed and I can't tell you how much pleasure G-8 gave me. But I had to read old ones over again on account of this bi-monthly stuff.

Before I got sick, I was very active in all kinds of sports, being captain of our school's four major sports. That was back in 1940 before I became a bed-bug.

I'm afraid I will have to remain a Lone Agent until another year rolls round. The reason is that very soon I'm going to Florida for the winter and then up to Michigan for the summer. All because of a germ! However, I already have plans under way for a chapter and I feel sure I'll have one by next year this time.

I sincerely hope I haven't bored you too much with this letter. Best of luck to you and continued success.

Yours till Herring's holy,

Chad Oliver
3956 Ledgewood
Cincinnati
Ohio

Isn't that a swell letter, gang? It was

written some time ago, but just got around to getting into the mag. That may be the way with your letter, so keep watching for it.

Nice going, Chad. Hope you're doing fine now. But just to make sure—how about a lot of you, gang, writing Chad a card? Send him a picture postcard of your home town or something and write him a note on the back wishing him luck.

Dear G-8:

I'm not another Joe Hawkins, but like your mag a lot. I'm 14 and have a question to ask. Don't think I want to tell you how to run your mag, but couldn't you kill off your villains once in a while? It would please me pink if you would. It gets uninteresting when you almost know that when you finish an adventure the villain will be back. Please kill him so surely that you could take him home and stuff him.

I am a Lone Agent and lack just one person to form a chapter.

It would please me very much if you would get that Jap, Matzu.

Yours till Nippy and Bull get a German accent,

Charles Paterson.

Charles. I'm sure that Bob Hogan would like nothing better than to kill off all of those villains, both in the last war and in this one too. But we get other letters that beg us to continue with Herr Doktor Krueger and Stahlmaske and the others. And remember this. Once we have definitely killed off a villain, you can't bring him back, even stuffed. We did think in the old days that he had them done for when we left a job.

Well, that's all for this time, gang. Tail winds and clear skies.

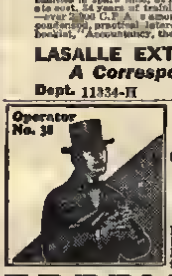
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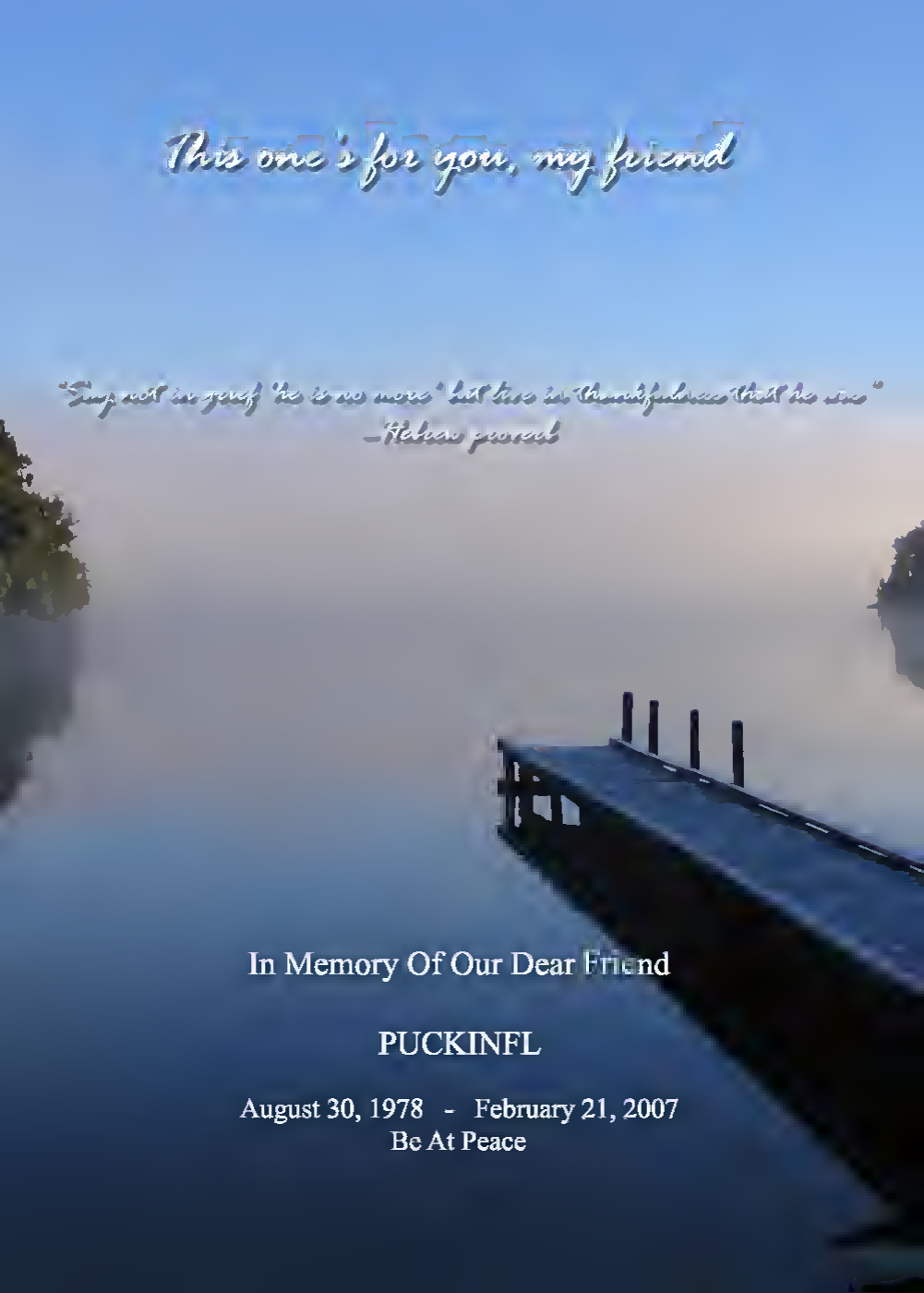
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